



## The place-name element *bólstaðr* in the North Atlantic area, Navnestudier 38

Gammeltoft, Peder

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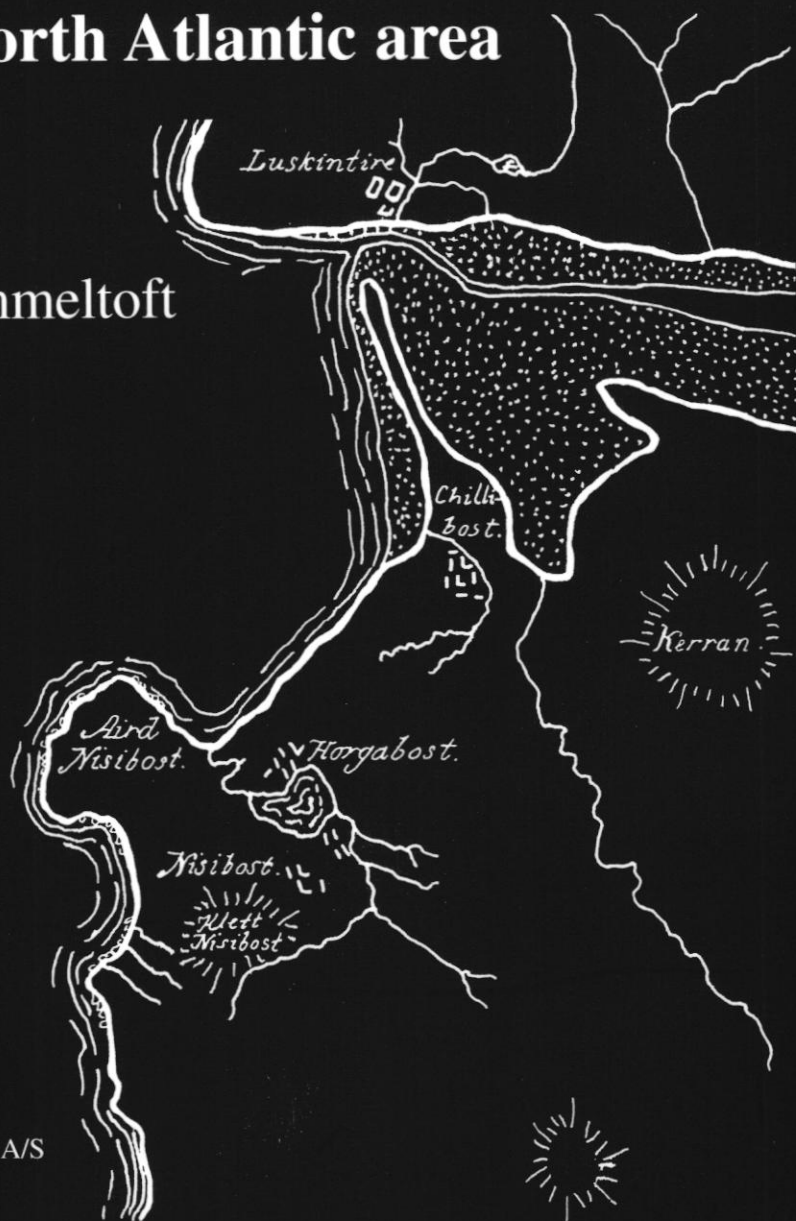
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Peder Gammeltoft



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Peder Gammeltoft

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in the North Atlantic area

*Med dansk resumé*

C.A. Reitzels Forlag A/S  
Copenhagen 2001

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# Preface

The study of Viking-Age place-names of Scandinavian origin may yield considerable knowledge about a period of which we know relatively little. The primary purpose of this book is to shed some light on the Scandinavian settlement in the North Atlantic area. Although this work comprises the most comprehensive collection of recorded forms of the place-name element Old Norse *bólstaðr* to date, it is not to be regarded to be the final word on the subject. I merely intend this book to be a contribution to our knowledge of this place-name element and to the nature of Scandinavian settlement in this area.

I have been most fortunate in having been able to discuss several of the problems relating to the study of this place-name element with friends and colleagues in Scandinavia and the British Isles. I am particularly grateful to Stefan Brink, Barbara Crawford, Staffan Fridell, Ian Fraser, Gunilla Harling-Kranck, Berit Sandnes, Svavar Sigmundsson, Povl Skårup, Tom Schmidt, Brian Smith, Simon Taylor, William P. L. Thomson, Mats Wahlberg, Doreen Waugh and Eivind Weyhe for supplying me with information and allowing me to quote their views.

My greatest debt is to Bill Nicolaisen for getting me interested in place-names in the first place, and to Gillian Fellows-Jensen, my mentor, who has read this present book in manuscript. I would also like to thank Vibeke Dalberg who has been a great help on matters of theory. I am also greatly indebted to all my other colleagues at the Institute for Name Research for their support, encouragement and many an enjoyable hour in their company.

Maps 1-4 have been electronically generated by me on the basis of various computer software, such as Maps 6.0 by European Standard Software (maps 1, 2 and 4) and GenMap UK 1.04 (map 3). Maps 5-10 are sketch maps which have been based on various topographical material. These are all the work of my good friend Jerrik Winther Johannsen, and I owe him a great many thanks for his friendly assistance.

I am not a native to the North Atlantic area, and my work on the *bólstaðr* place-names has provided me with a rare insight into a unique and diverse region, whose people, landscape and history I have come to value

very highly indeed. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have had the opportunity to peer through the looking glass and gaze at the wonders of this world.

Copenhagen, May 2001  
Peder Gammeltoft



# List of phonetic symbols

One of the problems in connection with the writing of this book has been the question of phonetic renderings. Different alphabets have been used with different place-names. The phonetic symbols used in this book have been reduced to the smallest possible number. This has been done with increased readability in mind. For instance, the phonetic alphabet used in *Norske Gaardnavne* operates with greater nuances than does the *International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)*, e.g. in terms of indicating tonality. Although it is a tempting idea to render a pronunciation of a place-name as precisely as possible and one that should always be attempted, it is in terms of practicality and readability not optimal. The problem lies in the fact that it would demand too much previous study on behalf of the reader to achieve adequate skills in deciphering a concise phonetic rendering. I have, therefore, opted for a more simplistic and less nuanced phonetic rendering in many of the place-names.

In one area, however, I have chosen to adopt double standards. In Norwegian phonetics, it is customary to indicate not only vowel length but also consonant length, which is indicated by a doubling of the consonant in question. Since this feature may aid the etymological analysis of a place-name, I have chosen to maintain this system where it has hitherto been utilised, i.e. in Norway.

The phonetic symbols used in this book are listed below in the following manner: The order is alphabetical with the 'purest' sounds appearing first. Vowels come in the order: short vowel, long vowel, and diphthongs; *ð* comes after the *d*-group, *b* after the *t*-group, and *æ*, *ø*, *å*, *χ*, and *γ* sounds appear at the end of the list.

<i>a</i>	=	as in Danish <i>m<u>a</u>nd</i> [ <i>man</i> ]
<i>a:</i>	=	as in Eng. <i>f<u>a</u>ther</i> [ <i>fa:ðə</i> ]
<i>ai</i>	=	as in Eng. <i>f<u>i</u>nd</i> [ <i>faind</i> ]
<i>au</i>	=	as in Eng. <i>h<u>ou</u>r</i> [ <i>auə</i> ]
<i>b</i>	=	as in Eng. <i>b<u>i</u>n</i> [ <i>bɪn</i> ]
<i>d</i>	=	as in Eng. <i>d<u>e</u>sk</i> [ <i>desk</i> ], <i>f<u>i</u>nd</i> [ <i>faind</i> ]
<i>dʒ</i>	=	as in Eng. <i>b<u>a</u>dg<u>e</u>r</i> [ <i>bædʒə</i> ], <i>g<u>e</u>ner<u>a</u>l</i> [ <i>dʒenrəl</i> ]
<i>ð</i>	=	as in Eng. <i><u>th</u>e</i> [ <i>ðə</i> ]
<i>e</i>	=	as in Danish <i>m<u>e</u>d</i> [ <i>með</i> ]
<i>e:</i>	=	as in Danish <i>l<u>e</u>ve</i> [ <i>le:və</i> ]

<i>ei</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>gate</u> [geit]
<i>ey</i>	=	as in Old Norse <u>eystri</u> [eystri]
<i>ə</i>	=	'schwa', as in Eng. <u>finger</u> [fɪŋgə]
<i>ε</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>get</u> [get]
<i>f</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>find</u> [faɪnd]
<i>g</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>gate</u> [geit]
<i>h</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>hound</u> [haund]
<i>hl</i>	=	as in Norwegian <u>lille</u> [lihlə]
<i>i</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>happy</u> [hæpi]
<i>ɪ</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>bin</u> [bɪn]
<i>j</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>you</u> [ju]
<i>k</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>canoe</u> [kə'nu:], <u>kettle</u> [kettl]
<i>l</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>late</u> [leit]
<i>ɫ</i>	=	'thick' l, as may be found in Eng. <u>ball</u> [bɔ:ɫ]
<i>m</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>make</u> [meik]
<i>n</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>neck</u> [nek]
<i>ŋ</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>thing</u> [pɪŋ]
<i>ŋ</i>	=	a palatalised <i>n</i> as in the Western Norwegian place-name Fanbostad [faŋŋbossta]
<i>o</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>bond</u> [bond]
<i>o:</i>	=	as in Danish <u>fole</u> [fo:lə]
<i>ou</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>phone</u> [foun]
<i>ɔ</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>hot</u> [hɔt]
<i>ɔ:</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>Paul</u> [pɔ:l]
<i>ɔu</i>	=	as in Ork. dialect <u>noust</u> [nɔust]
<i>p</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>pilot</u> [pailət]
<i>r</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>runner</u> [ranə]
<i>s</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>singer</u> [sɪŋə]
<i>ʃ</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>ship</u> [ʃɪp]
<i>sk</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>skin</u> [skɪn], <u>tusk</u> [task]
<i>skj</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>skewer</u> [skjuə]
<i>t</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>tower</u> [taʊə], <u>hint</u> [hɪnt]
<i>tʃ</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>chunk</u> [tʃaŋk], <u>lynch</u> [lɪntʃ]
<i>þ</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>thing</u> [pɪŋ]
<i>u</i>	=	as in Danish <u>muld</u> [mul]
<i>u:</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>moon</u> [mu:n]
<i>a</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>sun</u> [san]
<i>v</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>vault</u> [vɔ:lt], <u>wives</u> [waɪvz]
<i>w</i>	=	as in Eng. <u>want</u> [wɔnt]
<i>y</i>	=	as in Danish <u>myldre</u> [myldrə]

y:	=	as in Danish <i>myre</i> [my:rə]
ɥ	=	as in some Western Norwegian place-names in <i>Mykle-</i> [mykkle-]
z	=	as in Eng. <i>zeal</i> [zi:l]
æ	=	as in Danish <i>læs</i> [læs]
æ:	=	as in Danish <i>læse</i> [læ:sə]
ø	=	as in Danish <i>mølle</i> [mølə]
ø:	=	as in Danish <i>nøle</i> [nø:lə]
øi	=	as in the Western Norwegian place-name <i>Øydebost</i> [øibåsst]
ɐ	=	as in Swedish <i>hör</i> [hɐr]
å	=	as in Danish <i>håb</i> [håb]
å:	=	as in Danish <i>stråle</i> [strå:lə]
χ	=	as in Scots <i>loch</i> [lɔχ] and German <i>ach</i> [aχ]
ɣ	=	as in the Lewis place-name <i>Bosta</i> [bɔ:stay]. Employed in the local dialect to close an otherwise open final syllable.
()	=	Brackets. Indicates that a symbol fluctuates between being pronounced and not being pronounced.
'	=	Main stress, always indicated.
,	=	Secondary stress, only indicated when necessary.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. General introduction

This book is a revised and reworked version of my Ph.D.-thesis *The place-name element Old Norse bólstaðr. An interdisciplinary study of the development of, and change in, place-names which contain the generic -bólstaðr, from their origins in Norway to their dissemination to the North Atlantic area and elsewhere*, (Aarhus Universitet, 1999). The present work is intended as a survey of the development of the place-name generic, ON *bólstaðr*, m., from being a local northern Scandinavian place-name type to becoming the most widespread place-name generic in the North Atlantic. The collected material will be submitted to a detailed analysis of the reasons behind the development of, and change in, the onomastic inventory of the specifics. The focus of attention will be on the Norwegian and Scottish material. In order to achieve as complete a picture of this place-name type as possible it has been necessary to collect as many known place-names in ON *bólstaðr* as possible.

The place-name material has been collected partly from already published works and partly from map sources. The total number of place-names investigated here amounts to 461.<sup>1</sup> Each place-name will undergo a thorough etymological analysis on the basis of source material and, to a lesser degree, pronunciation. Not all of the place-names in this book derive from ON *bólstaðr*, m. A fair proportion of the place-names earlier interpreted as having derived from this place-name element are, in fact, of different origins, as are some later analogical reflexes of ON *bólstaðr*. These two distinct types of place-names will be discussed where relevant and are listed separately in Appendices 1 and 2 under their respective country of location. However, the bulk of the place-names do originate from ON *bólstaðr* and the focus of this book will naturally be on these names.

The place-name material is structured so that each genuine *bólstaðr* place-name investigated in this book will appear in the section pertaining to the country in which it is located. For each country, a survey of gener-

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1. An additional 71 place-names and 19 other constructions containing the East Scandinavian cognate *bolstaþer*, m., have also been included in this book, albeit with less attention paid to interpretation of the individual names and constructions.

al and regional phonetic developments of the element *bólstaðr* will appear in a separate sub-chapter prior to the section containing the place-name material proper. The place-name sub-chapters are divided into sub-sections of place-names that are simplex formations and place-names that are compound formations – unless stated otherwise.

Each entry is listed alphabetically in its modern, latest known, or normalised form. The place-names are grouped alphabetically-etymologically, i.e. the place-names are listed alphabetically (*ð* comes after *d*, *þ* after *t*, and *æ*, *ø*, *ø*, and *å* appear at the end of the list). If there is more than one name of the same etymology the group of names of common origin is listed together under the first occurrence alphabetically, ordered by modern (or latest known) form, county and parish. Each place-name is followed by an indication of its topographical status if known (Ordnance Survey classification system: S = settlement; R = relief; W = water, A = antiquity; O = other). Each entry has its location stated, for example a grid reference wherever possible (NGR-type for Britain and UTM-type elsewhere), parish (occasionally incl. local district or island) and county. Although I have done my outmost to locate each place-name investigated in this survey as closely as possible, some entries cannot be located any more closely than to parish or even county.

Then follow the sources for the individual place-name. These form the basis for interpretation and include both source-forms and phonetic transcriptions (where these have been stated in previously published works). The individual source-forms are cited with the recorded form first, followed by the year of recording and source-identification. This is typically further supplemented with page or document details, although these are sometimes omitted if the source-forms are taken from an otherwise reliable secondary source.

The interpretation of the place-name, prompted by its source forms, follows immediately. The object of discussion is usually the specific. The generic will only be discussed if there is any doubt as to its origin or if any other circumstances about the generic require additional discussion. Entries with a common origin are listed and interpreted together under the alphabetically first occurring form. The interpretation will be as thorough as I deem necessary for a satisfactory conclusion as to an origin. Place-names whose specifics are of the same origin are normally listed together. However, if there are clear differences in number and case between the individual examples, the listing of the place-names in question will be according to these differences.

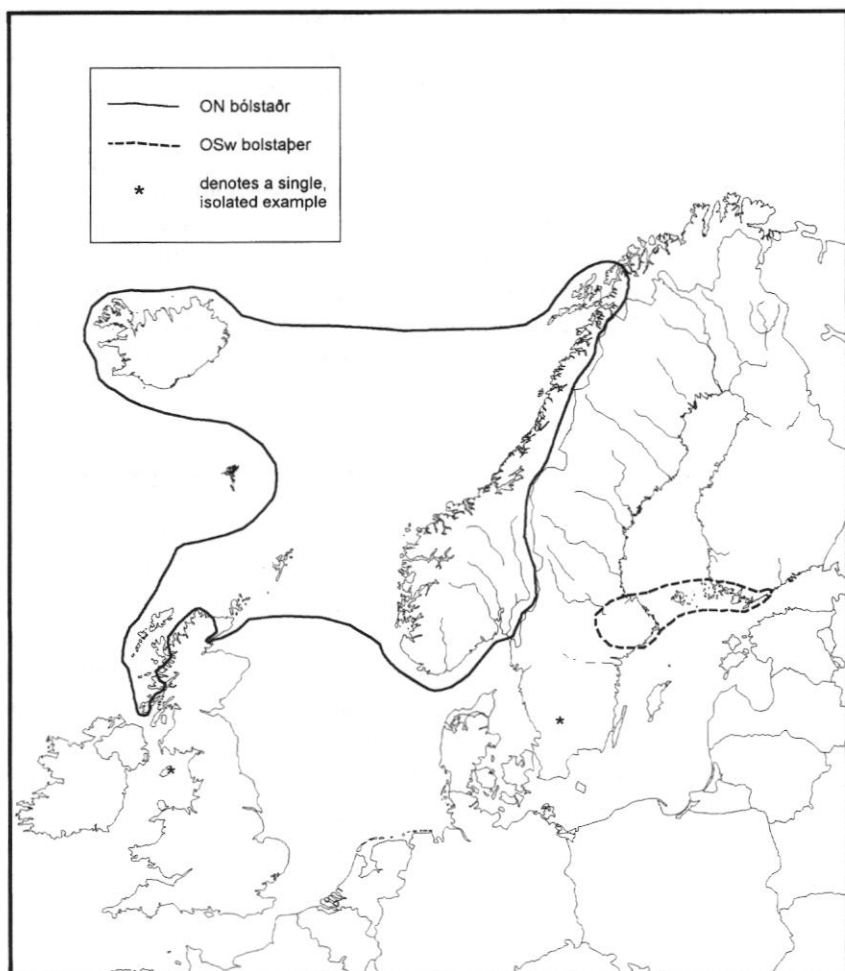


Fig. 1. The distribution of place-names in Old Norse *bólstaðr* and Old Swedish *bolstaþer*.

There will also be an attempt to analyse localities with names in ON *bólstaðr* from a topographical point of view. Optimally, all the names in this work should have undergone a topographical survey, but owing to the large number of names and their widespread distribution (see fig. 1.), this has not been possible. Therefore, the topographical survey will be in the form of a couple of case study surveys from representative areas in both Norway and Scotland. *Bólstaðr*-settlements from the counties of Sogn og

Fjordane and Møre og Romsdal in western Norway will be included in this study in order to find out what the settlement situation was in the country of origin and how naming in ON *bólstaðr* took place there. A similar survey has been undertaken in Shetland, to represent the colonial settlement situation. The survey data from these two areas make possible a comparative study of settlement structures in the homeland and in the colonies. Various parameters will be utilised in the attempt to determine what was the preferred settlement site for a *bólstaðr*-settlement. Hopefully, this will reveal what motives prompted the Viking-Age settlers to use this type of place-name and for which kind of localities. The term Viking Age covers, in accordance with the general scientific tradition, the period from c. AD 800-1100.

## 1.2. Theoretical and methodological considerations

Although the study of names, or Onomastics, has its foundations in a long tradition of research, it has no clear-cut definition of its object of research: the *proper noun*. Therefore, I find it necessary to outline the terminology. The reason for the uncertainty is the application of the term *name* (and its cognates), which is the popular rendering of the terminology for this brand of science in most European languages. The term *name* is, however, not very precise in its classification of the subject. The problem lies in the fact that the term *name* is generally used for *proper nouns* as well as for *collective nouns*. For instance, words like budgerigar, wren, magpie and starling are usually referred to as *bird names*, although these are in reality not proper names but appellatives denoting special classes of birds. A bird name only really occurs when for example a budgerigar is called *Mountbatten* or *James*, or any other term singling out one budgerigar from all others.

The cause of this confusion has to do with the methods of classification of the noun in classical Latin grammar. Here, nouns were divided into two types: *nomen appellativum* and *nomen proprium*. The similarity of the terminology of the two classes later caused them to be confused with each other and they are now often referred to by the same term: i.e. *name*.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, to avoid confusion, the two classes of nouns in this work will be referred to as *appellative* and *name*, respectively. Their char-

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2. Dalberg, Vibeke, 'Afgrænsningsproblemer i navneforskningen', published in *Danske Studier* 1989 (Copenhagen, 1989), p. 35.

acteristics are as follows: an *appellative* has meaning, e.g. a meaning that constitutes the group of characteristics and attributes that are common for a phenomenon. For instance the term *cat* has signification because it is possible to talk about an appearance, characteristics, etc., which are common for all *cats* and which thereby define the term *cat*. In other words, appellatives connote. Names, on the other hand, cannot be said to function in the same way. The term *Edinburgh* does not signify.<sup>3</sup> It is not possible to establish one set of attributes, appearances or characteristics that are common for all *Edinburghs* and which defines the term *Edinburgh*. The term *Edinburgh* is denotative – it refers to one single individuality. Viewed in isolation, *cat* may be connected to an infinite number of specimens, namely all those which fall within the area of meaning for the term. The term *Edinburgh* refers to one single individuality only, as the term can only be linked to one specimen. When the term *Edinburgh* is nevertheless able to be linked to more than one individuality, it is because there exists more than one name of this form. This means that names point out individualities not only in the language use (*la parole*), but also in the language system (*la langue*).<sup>4</sup> This may not be the most unequivocal terminology, but it is the most manageable one, and the generally accepted one in this field of study. All other word classes are referred to by their respective general terms, such as verb, adjective, adverb, etc.

Onomastics can be divided further into two main categories, namely, *place-name studies* or *toponymics* and the *study of personal names* or *anthroponymics*. This book will, as should be more than obvious by now, be concerned with the former type of study. Place-names are created by utilising the word material available at any given point in time. This word material can either be non-proprial (i.e. appellatives, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, etc.) or even proprial (personal names or place-names entering into new place-name constructions, usually as specifics, but also as unchanged forms applied to new places as a result of analogy). Place-

3. It should be noted that although names do not signify when functioning as names, they have all been formed on the basis of the word material available at the time of coinage. This name material all signified. This means that before and during coinage, the elements constituting a name all had meaning. It is the analysis of the elements of a name at a pre-proprial stage which is the basis of the etymological analysis of names.

4. Cf. Christensen (Dalberg), Vibeke & Sørensen, John Kousgård, *Stednavneforskning 1*, (Copenhagen, 1972), pp. 9-12, and Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 'Early Scandinavian naming in the Western and Northern Isles', published in *Northern Scotland* 3, 2 (1979-80), p. 106.



names are created by means of the standard utilisation of the syntax, grammar and vocabulary which exists as the source language at the time and place of naming. Therefore, it is possible, if enough is known about the language at the time of naming, to make an etymological analysis of the generic form of a place-name. The etymological analysis of place-names has traditionally been the main concern of all place-name researchers. However, it can be argued that this type of research deals not with place-names but with the components of place-names prior to place-name formation.<sup>5</sup> Naturally, the place-names chosen for study will be subjected to an etymological analysis, as this is most helpful in trying to get to grips with how a name formation was applied, not only in its physical surroundings, but also by the society in which it was applied. Furthermore, there will be a semantic analysis, in the tradition of the system devised by Kurt Zilliacus,<sup>6</sup> of the combination of the specific with its generic. This model of analysis has been used in order to get a more detailed view of why ON *bólstaðr* was applied to certain sites in the way it was, and to isolate the original usage of this type of generic.

In order to get the best picture on which to base the etymological analysis (which will also be the basis for the semantic analysis), it is necessary to get as close to the original formation as possible. The ideal would be to know the time of coining as well as the namer and his or her reasons for naming. In real terms, however, the picture is quite different. Although the majority of names in *-bólstaðr* are usually no more than 1000-1200 years old at the most, they are still, so to speak, from a pre-historic age. From the Viking Age there are few written Scandinavian sources. Viking culture had little tradition for writing and oral means of communication prevailed. Most of what we know from written sources about the Viking Age has either been written by the victims of Scandinavian aggressors or by later medieval scribes writing down stories of yore, the sagas. However great the sagas are as literature, they are not historical sources, and should not be approached as such. Hence, knowledge must inevitably come from medieval and, more often than not, later sources. The younger the source, the more tentative some of the individual analyses will be.

Since the dissemination of these place-names covers a large area, Norway, northern and western Scotland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands,

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5. Dalberg, Vibeke, *Stednavneændringer og funktionalitet*, (København, 1991), p. 9.

6. Cf. Zilliacus, Kurt, 'Ortnamnen i Houtskär', in *SNF* 55, (Helsinki, 1966).

there have naturally been numerous sources to check.<sup>7</sup> Wherever suitable edited material has not been available, any relevant sources have been checked personally. However, if earlier researchers have satisfactorily explained the origins of sources of place-name forms, these are taken to be reliable.

It is on the basis of these sources and occasionally of phonetic transcriptions of the individual forms that the analysis of the place-name material will take place. The analysis will consist of an etymological explanation of the name in the source language, as well as an explanation of the phonetic development of the place-name if this is not immediately clear. Any part of speech that is included in the semantic analysis will be presented in the normalised coinage-form. The combined etymological and semantic analysis should then help to explain the onomastic function of ON *bólstaðr*. The appellative connotations of this place-name element will serve as a guide for the explanation of its onomastic function. With careful consideration of these parameters, it should be possible to come to a linguistic conclusion about this place-name type. By source language is meant the closest possible known and described language, i.e. Old Norse (ON), part of the western branch of the North Germanic family of Indo-European.

A place-name usually stands on its own – the individual place-name on its own denotes a location. In other words, it is a formally primary formation. Not uncommonly, however, a place-name forms part of another place-name. It forms part of a denotative structure – it is a formally secondary place-name. A fair proportion of the formally primary place-name formations in this book contain other place-names. Other place-names in this study are themselves formally secondary. Whenever a formally secondary name is discussed, its status will be clearly marked with an asterix (\*).

Dating a place-name is a complex matter, and dating a group of place-names is no more simple, although emerging patterns help to give a general idea as to the dating. Dating can be absolute, i.e. fixed to a particular date or period in time, or it can be relative, i.e. fixed in relation to one or more phenomena. Only a few place-names can be dated absolutely, as it is rarely known exactly when a place-name was formed. Occasionally, a source may refer to an act of naming, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Instead, most dating of place-names is relative. In this respect it

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7. For a full list of sources, see *Bibliography and Abbreviations*, below.

is normal to relate naming within *termini inter quos*, i.e. within a frame of earliest possible and latest possible date of naming.

The methods by which to determine the dating of a place-name are numerous and differ greatly. Roughly speaking, the criteria may be either *linguistic* or *non-linguistic*.<sup>8</sup> When linguistic dating-criteria are applied, the place-name in question is checked against the chronology established by historical linguistics. In this respect the place-name is always regarded as an identified linguistic entity. Place-name dating can be undertaken if certain phonological or syntactical aspects are found displaying peculiarities datable to a certain historical linguistic period. Furthermore, if loan words are found whose entry into the language can be dated to certain periods, then these can also be used for identification. There are two points one has to bear in mind when using linguistic criteria for dating. Firstly, the place-names undergoing dating must be genuine place-name formations. If the place-names themselves in their entirety are existing linguistic entities (i.e. words in everyday use), the linguistic dating-methods can only be used to date the formation of these entities as words and not as place-names. Secondly, the linguistically datable features must be attested outside the category of place-names, as the dating otherwise would lead to a circular argument.

Often a place-name can be dated on grounds of historical events, geographical location, or from its appearance in the written sources. These methods of dating are also called non-linguistic criteria. These criteria date the place-name in relation to its connection to certain events. Other non-linguistic criteria, such as e.g. statistical dating (tax-assessment, etc.) and archaeological dating, only really date the locality to which a place-name refers and not the place-name formation as such. Even if the age of a place-name and that of the locality to which it refers are often the same, at least when talking about settlement names, I feel that these latter criteria should be used only with the utmost caution. Since place-names in ON *bólstaðr*/OSw *bolstaþer* are to a large degree found in the Scandinavian Viking-Age (and late-Medieval) colonies, their dating will to a large extent rely on historical events. Sometimes the sources can indicate a date of formation. Under all circumstances, place-names will always have been formed prior to their occurrence in written sources, and this automatically gives a date of formation *terminus ante quem*. This dating is, nonetheless, usually extremely rough, as the occurrence of a place-name in writ-

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8. Christensen (Dalberg), Vibeke & Sørensen, John Kousgård, *Stednavneforskning 1*, (Copenhagen, 1972), p. 163.

ten sources does not indicate a date of establishment any closer than prior to occurrence – this can be anything from a day to hundreds of years earlier. Only rarely do the sources offer an absolute date and nowhere in the present material.

A purely linguistic analysis of a place-name type cannot, unfortunately, reveal all the influence the given site had on the selection of the particular name in question. For a more rounded analysis of this place-name type, I have resorted to a topographical survey. Information about features such as altitude, distance from the sea, distance from water, slope, soil type, soil quality, the physical relation to other key types of place-name, etc., may give us some degree of understanding of the application of ON *bólstaðr* to certain types of localities. Furthermore, some attention will be paid to archaeology. Archaeological remains may help to determine whether the settlement-sites given names in ON *bólstaðr* were established on already utilised land or not.

Ideally, such a survey would be applied to every single place-name studied in this book, but considerations such as the size and format of this present volume of *Navnestudier* has caused me to include only a couple of case studies from two areas. Since I am neither a settlement historian nor an archaeologist and since it is difficult from today's conditions to see what the settlement situation was like at the time of initial settlement, it is natural that the extra-onomastic information has had to be approached with caution. Whatever the findings of the case studies, they have to be taken only as indicative of what the actual settlement situation may have looked like.

### 1.3. The disposition of the book

The focus of attention will be on the place-name ON *bólstaðr* and on its expansion westward, which took place in the parts of Scotland with a Scandinavian influx – also called *Scotia Scandinavica*.<sup>9</sup> These areas are

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9. Since it is difficult to define the areas of Scandinavian influence in Scotland more precisely, I am here using the terminology invented by Professor W. F. H. Nicolaisen to cover the areas of Scotland which felt a Scandinavian influence during the Viking Age and later. Cf. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 'Place-names as evidence for linguistic stratification in Scotland', in Dalberg, V., Holmberg, B., Sørensen, J. Kousgård (eds), *NORNA-Rapporter 18. Sprogvidenskabelig udnyttelse af stednavnematerialet*, (Uppsala, 1980), pp. 219-20.

the Northern Isles, Caithness and Sutherland, the Hebrides and their adjacent mainland. In order to understand fully the extent and development of the usage of this type of place-name in a colonial framework, it is necessary, firstly, to look closely at the onomastic situation and settlement pattern in the country of origin, Norway. Additional information may be gained from other areas in which ON *bólstaðr* was used as a place-name element. Therefore, most of the work will be focused on Norway and Scotland, especially on the designated areas of Shetland and Sogn & Fjordane/Møre & Romsdal, Norway.

At the time of coinage of place-names in *bólstaðr*, Norway and Scotia Scandinavica were to a large extent part of the same linguistic and cultural environment. The language of the Scandinavians in both places was West Scandinavian or Old Norse (ON) and their culture was typical of the Viking Age, albeit with a heavy element of Christianity in the North Atlantic area. The nearest areas, Iceland and the Faroe Islands have been included in this study because they were also part of the same historical, linguistic and cultural environment as that in Norway and Scotia Scandinavica in the Viking Age. In other words, the areas included are those which saw the western dissemination of ON *bólstaðr*.

There was also an East Scandinavian version of this place-name element, namely Old Swedish (OSw) *bolstaper*, m./Sw *bolstad*, sb. The distribution of this element is much more limited. It is found mostly in east-central Sweden and in the south-western parts of Finland, in the areas where Swedish influence was most significant. The usage of OSw *bolstaper* is rather different from that of ON *bólstaðr* in a number of aspects and not directly related. Therefore, the focus of attention on this material will be minimal and only a rough outline of the East Scandinavian dissemination will be offered in this book (in Ch. 8).

The layout of this book has been structured so that the origin and appellative usage of *bólstaðr* will appear prior to the chapters on the place-name material. Otherwise, each country will be dealt with separately, and all formal information relating to the object of discussion, ON *bólstaðr*, such as geography, dissemination, previous research into the place-name element, etc., will be discussed first. Then the place-name material will be analysed and dated. When the origins and dates of names have been established, it is possible to determine which locations are suitable to be included in the topographical survey. The total amount of information then forms the basis for the conclusions drawn about this place-name element.

The various analytical tools used in this book are all based on a variety

of theories. Wherever an analytical tool is used here, the theories and ideas behind the system are discussed at the beginning of the chapter in which it occurs.

## 1.4. The historical background

At the beginning of the Viking Age, Norway consisted of a number of petty kingdoms. But in the early 870s, Harald Finehair finally managed to assume power over Norway (or at least the southern and western parts of Norway). He challenged many of the powerful chieftains on the West Coast and they met him in battle at Hafrsfjörðr – a battle that fell out in Harald's favour. Harald seems to have been an energetic and ambitious king and he also made a serious attempt to subdue the Norse dominions in the Northern Isles and the Hebrides, although his motives for this are uncertain. *Heimskringla* mentions that many powerful people fled to these islands and carried out piracy on the Norwegian coast from there. It is likely that it was these dissenters Harald wanted to bring under control, albeit it is just as likely that Harald wished to secure taxes from these new and prosperous areas. From then on the King of Norway was nominally the sovereign of the Norse colonies in Scotland and Man. More often than not, however, the local leaders in the colonies kept the king's tribute for themselves, as did for instance Ketil Flatnose, whom Harald Fairhair had sent to rule the Hebrides for him.

It is not known when and how the first excursions from Norway into the North Atlantic area took place, nor is it known whether the first contact between the incoming Norse and the local populations was peaceful or violent. When any sort of Norse activity is recorded in the British Isles and in the North Atlantic by Christian chroniclers, the focus is solely on violence and aggression. The first time the *Annals of Ulster* specifically mentions Norse activity in the area relevant for this study is in 795. The entry for that year is as follows: 'The burning of Rathlin by the Gentiles; and Skye was pillaged and devastated'. Fear and hopelessness shines out of this statement, but what was it that made the Scandinavians capable of such incursions, and why did they act in this way?

The British Isles were a convenient stepping-stone for the Scandinavian peoples to trade with Western Europe. The Scandinavians had commodities such as furs, walrus-ivory, soapstone, rope and amber, which were highly valued by other European communities. The Scandinavians, for their part, were interested in goods such as glass, honey, wine, precious stones, jewellery and metals, etc. The interest in the exchange of goods

and wares meant a growth in trade and the emergence of trading towns in Scandinavia, such as Hedeby, Ribe, and Birka, prior to and during the Viking Age. The apparent increase in trading seems to suggest an emphasis on trade as a means of acquiring wealth and higher standards of living. Certainly, there is some evidence from archaeological excavations<sup>10</sup> in the said trading centres, which seems to suggest so. The Scandinavians had the technology for sea trading more than any other people in this region, and hence also the motivation to negotiate vast stretches of water to gain goods. We have no positive proof from contemporary sources that trade was the original reason for Scandinavians paying visits to the British Isles, but certain chronicles have certainly suggested so.<sup>11</sup>

These centuries also testify to this growth in wealth in other ways. Iron production and the technologies associated with the production of iron improve, and this should mainly be seen as an attempt to improve production methods in agriculture. More and more land seems to have come under cultivation during this time – mostly as the result of a not insignificant increase in the population. The increase in population was also probably caused by improved living conditions in Norway as a result of the growth in wealth. However, all available land was eventually brought under cultivation and the area could no longer sustain a further increase in the population. Recent archaeological studies from Hedemarken in Norway have shown that the utilisation of farming land was stretched to the utmost, with farming settlements situated even on the edge of today's arable land.<sup>12</sup> To avoid overpopulation and ensuing poverty, many people seem to have left their native Norway to eke out an existence in the North Atlantic, as can be seen in the huge number of Norse place-names found in the former Norse colonies in Scotland. Furthermore, information from historical sources suggests that the settlement or *landnám* of Iceland was complete within 60 years of the discovery of the country.

That Norse activity was great in the North Atlantic area at the beginning of the Viking Age is visible mainly through sources such as the *Annals of Ulster* mentioned above, as well as through the rather later saga literature. The first period of recorded Scandinavian impact on Britain, the raids,

10. Graham-Campbell, James, *The Vikings*, (London, 1980), pp. 87-90.

11. Cf. e.g. 'Giraldus Cambrensis, Topographia Hibernica', Opera, vol. V, p. 186', published in *ESSH*, p. 280.

12. Pilø, Lars, 'Urgården – en mytes død. Et kritisk blikk på grunnlaget for norsk bosetnings-historisk forskning', in Sandnes, Berit, *et al.* (eds), *NORNA-Rapporter 70B. Oluf Rygh rapport fra symposium på Stiklestad 13-15 mai 1999*, (Uppsala, 2000), p. 182.



starts in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century with the murder of the reeve in Portland c. 789-802<sup>13</sup> and the raid on Lindisfarne in north-eastern England in 793. The year 794 records the first attack by Scandinavians on Scotland, with the following entry in the *Annals of Ulster*: 'Devastation of all the islands of Britain by the gentiles'.<sup>14</sup> From then on there is a continuous succession of raids and attacks on Scotland. Both religious centres and secular sites were raided, starting with Iona and Rathlin and the devastation of Skye in 795, the plundering of the Hebrides and an attack on Scotland in 798,<sup>15</sup> etc. The British Isles was not the only target of Viking activity. Dicuil notes in his *De mensura orbis terrae* in the year 825 that the Christian anchorite mission in what appears to be the Faroes had been given up 'because of the Northman pirates'.<sup>16</sup>

It remains unknown whether the sudden flourishing of Viking attacks on the British Isles signifies that the Norse colonisation had already begun, or whether it occurred in the wake of the devastation. One piece of circumstantial evidence from the later *Færeyinga saga*, however, suggests that the Norse settled in the Northern British Isles early on.<sup>17</sup> This saga starts with the words: 'A man called Grímr Kamban was the first to settle in the Faroe Islands' [*my translation*]<sup>18</sup>. Judging from Grímr Kamban's byname, he would seem to have been of mixed Gaelic-Norse descent, as *Kamban* is an Old Norse rendering of the Gaelic word *cammán*, itself derived from *cam* 'lame, misshapen'.<sup>19</sup> The saga does not say explicitly when he settled in the Faroe Islands, but the saga does state that Grímr Kamban's grandson Þórólf Þorsteinsson went with Hrafnaflóki to look for Iceland in the last third of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, traditionally said to be c. 870. This means that Grímr Kamban's settlement in the Faroe Islands must

13. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Ch. 787, in Whitelock, Dorothy (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon chronicle: a revised translation*, (New Brunswick, 1961).

14. 'Annals of Ulster vol. i.', in *ESSH*, vol. I, p. 255.

15. 'Annals of Ulster vol. i.'; 'Annals of Innisfallen; Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores, vol. ii.'; 'Dublin Annals of Innisfallen, Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores, vol. ii.', in *ESSH*, vol. i., pp. 255-7.

16. Tierney, J. J., *Dicuili liber de mensura orbis terrae*, (Dublin, 1967), vii, Ch. 15, pp. 74-7.

17. The *Færeyinga saga* may originally have been written c. 1200. It is not known in its entirety, only fragments of it survive in various Icelandic sagas.

18. "Maðr er nefndr Grímr Kamban, han bygði fyrstr Færeyjar.", in Halldórsson, Ólafur (ed.), *Færeyinga saga*, (Reykjavík, 1987), Ch. 1, p 3.

19. Cf. Lind 1920-1, p. 185.



have occurred a considerable time in advance of Hrafnaflóki's Icelandic journey, most likely in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. How Grímr got his byname is of course not known but it is not conceivable that he should have acquired it without his and other Norse people's having already been in longstanding contact with Gaelic-speaking people, most likely in a settlement situation. The later Icelandic and Faroese sources must, however, be approached with caution, as they generally relate to events that occurred up to three centuries earlier. However, as the following paragraph will show, the case of Grímr Kamban is far from unique, and considerable Norse settlement in the Scottish Isles cannot but have been a reality at least a generation prior to the settlement of Iceland.

The *Landnámabók* and Ari Þorgilsson's *Íslendingabók* bear the burden of evidence for dating the settlement of Iceland to the last third of the ninth century, in particular the date c. 870. That this date may actually be correct has recently been corroborated through tephrochronological evidence.<sup>20</sup> The first Scandinavian said to have settled is Hrafnaflóki, but many followed him shortly. In fact, the *Landnámabók* states that Iceland was fully settled within sixty years. Most of these settlers were undoubtedly from Norway but a fair share of early settlers appear to have come from the Hebrides and the Northern Isles, the most prominent of which are e.g. Helgi the Lean and Aud the Wealthy. From other sources, e.g. personal names, it is evident that a not insignificant number of settlers must have been of mixed Hiberno-Norse or Gaelic-Norse descent. Personal names of Gaelic origin, such as *Ávangr*, *Bekan*, *Bjollok*, *Duðpak*, *Greløð*, *Kaðall*, *Kalman*, *Kjallakr*, *Kjartan*, *Koðrán*, *Konáll*, *Kormákr*, *Njáll*, etc., together with bynames like *bjólan*, *feilan*, *hnokan*, *lunan*, *meldun*, etc., are often found in Icelandic genealogies as well as sagas. As noted above, it is not known when the Faroe Islands were discovered and settled by the Norse. However, considering that one of the very first settlers of Iceland was himself the grandson of the person (Grímr Kamban) whom the *Færeyinga saga* will have as its first settler, then the Faroes must have been colonised a generation or two earlier than Iceland.

From the outset Iceland was autonomous from Norway, and established its own legal system (albeit mirroring that of the homeland), the law assembly or the *þing*. All men capable of carrying arms had the right and duty to turn up at assemblies. Soon, however, the law assembly acquired

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20. Vésteinsson, Orri, 'Patterns of settlement in Iceland: a study in prehistory', in *Saga Book*, vol. xxv, part 1, (London, 1998), pp. 2-4.

an extra layer and towards the end of the initial land-taking period, the national assembly, or *Alþing*, was established and thus became the backbone of official Icelandic society. The *Alþing* is represented in the local community by the *goði* or petty-chieftain. Iceland recognised no king as its sovereign but was a free-state – ruled from the *Alþing* and *þings* – for a considerable time. Gradually, however, Norway acquired more and more power over Iceland, and eventually Iceland broke under the pressure and became part of the Norwegian kingdom in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

In the Faroes a structure of society similar to that of Iceland developed early on. Various Norwegian kings made several attempts at gaining control of the Faroes but did not succeed until the year 1035, when Leifr Øssurarson became King Magnus the Good's vassal in the Faroe Islands. With this development the Faroese people, who had so far largely been independent of the Norwegian crown, now became subjects of the King of Norway. For a while, the Faroe population retained their autonomy in so far as their judiciary system and laws remained unchanged, and they controlled the foreign trade among themselves. However, in 1277 Magnus Lagabøter of Norway issued a law stating that the Norwegian *Gulating*-law should be enforced also in the Faroe Islands. What was of even greater consequence to Faroese autonomy was the Norwegian king's taking control of foreign trade with the Faroe Islands. The islands were in reality now only a Norwegian colony.

It is unknown what the structure of Norse society in the Scottish Isles was like, but it must most likely have been structured similarly to that of Iceland and the Faroes from an early date, although the Norwegian king nominally had overlordship. Certainly, the several occurrences of names containing the compound *þingvǫllr* 'assembly field' throughout the area of Scandinavian influence in Scotland and the Irish Sea would seem to suggest so.<sup>21</sup> The first indications we have of any organisation of the areas of Scotland settled or influenced by Scandinavians relate to the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century. For the year 853 the following entry, 'Godfrey, Fergus' son, lord of the Hebrides, died'.<sup>22</sup> Godfrey Fergusson is not unknown to history and he is known in 836 also to have been lord of Oriel (present-day Co. Armagh, Co. Louth, Co. Monaghan and part of Co. Fermanagh in Ireland). Godfrey quietly and slowly seems to have extended his sphere of control from

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21. Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, 'Tingwall, Dingwall and Thingwall', *NOWELE* vol. 21/22, April, 1993 (Odense, 1993), pp. 53-67.

22. 'Annals of the Four Masters', in *ESSH*, vol. i. p. 284.

Oriel into the Hebrides, so we may assume that the first recorded gaining control over a large Scandinavian-settled area would date from between 836 and 854. Some time after the death of Godfrey, the Hebrides seem to have been ruled as an independent entity by Ketil Flatnose.

Around the same time, the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, another centre of control emerges in the fertile Orkney (the less fertile Shetland seems to have been under the Orkney earldom from a very early stage). The first earls recorded as ruling the Orkney earldom were of the Møre dynasty. According to *Heimskringla*, Orkney and Shetland were granted to Earl Rognvald of Møre in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century in compensation for Rognvald's son Ivar, who had fallen in the campaign against the outlawed Norwegians raiding Norway from the colonies in Scotland. Rognvald, being more concerned about his position at home, immediately gave the earldom to his younger brother Sigurd.<sup>23</sup> The earls of Orkney were continually out to extend their territorial dominions. In the late ninth century Earl Sigurd Ríki and Thorstein the Red conquered Caithness and Sutherland, as far south, apparently, as to the river Oyckell. About a century later Earl Sigurd Digri managed to extend the earldom further into mainland Scotland (Caithness, Ross & Moray, Sutherland and the Dales according to *Njál's Saga*), Man, and apparently most of the Hebrides as well (since Earl Gilli in the Hebrides paid tribute to the earl of Orkney). This was as far as the Orkney earldom ever reached. During the succeeding earl, Thorfin Ríki, the earldom remained strong but after Earl Thorfin's death in the 1060s, the Earldom steadily dwindled in size. In the end it consisted only of Orkney, Shetland, Caithness, Sutherland and Ross.

A counterweight to the Orkney earldom, the Kingdom of Man and the Isles, slowly emerged as a southern Scandinavian power-centre controlling the Hebrides. The dynasty of Man was established in about 1075-1079, when Godred Crovan conquered Man. During Godred's reign and immediately afterwards the Kingdom of Man and the Isles seems to have been independent of Norway but in c. 1098 the Norwegian King Magnus Barelegs sailed out to assume lordship over the colonies. He first captured

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23. 'Heimskringla', in *ESSH*, vol. i. pp. 322-4; 332-4. There is also an alternative story about the establishment of the Earldom of Orkney. This version is recorded in 'Duald Mac-Firbis, Fragment III, pp. 158-162', in *ESSH*, vol. i. p. 292-4. Here the establishment of the earldom is a result of the expulsion of the king of Lochlann's eldest son Ronald in about 864, because he was thought to be aiming to usurp his father. Ronald then stays in the Orkney islands. See also Crawford, Barbara E., *Scandinavian Scotland*, (Leicester, 1987), pp. 53-4.

the Earls of Orkney, Paul and Erlend, and sent them back to Norway (where they died of disease). After this, he plundered extensively in the Hebrides, Kintyre, Scotland and Ireland, and then he took Man and Anglesey. Having successfully subdued the colonies and demonstrated his overwhelming power in the region, King Malcolm of Scotland was forced to make peace with Magnus on Magnus' terms. The peace agreement was that any island west of Scotland surrounded by enough water for Magnus to be able to sail between it and the mainland in his ship with the rudder in place would belong to Magnus. Kintyre also fell into the bargain when Magnus himself was towed across Kintyre with the rudder in place. When his campaign was over, he sailed home and left his son, Sigurd, at that time aged nine, to be king of the islands. Sigurd's dominion seems to have included both the Earldom of Orkney (since the Orkney earls had died in Norway during the campaign) as well as the Kingdom of Man and the Isles, including Anglesey.

This arrangement lasted until 1103, when Magnus died on an expedition to Ireland. Then Sigurd gave up his dominions to assume the kingship of Norway with his brothers Eystein and Olaf. As soon as Sigurd left the colonies in Scotland, the old dynasties quietly moved in again: Hakon, son of Earl Paul, was granted his father's and uncle's Earldom, and Olaf, son of Godred Crovan, reassumed control over Man and the Hebrides. The next many decades seem to have been relatively peaceful for the Kingdom of Man and the Isles. However, in the course of the 1150s an internal struggle within the Kingdom of Man and the Isles resulted in the division of the Kingdom between Godfrey Olafsson and his brother-in-law Somerled. Initially Somerled assumed power over the Hebrides south of Ardnamurchan, whereas Godfrey keeps Man and the Hebrides north of Ardnamurchan, but Somerled had further ambitions and in 1158 he robbed Godfrey of Man, only to be ousted again in 1160. After Somerled's death in 1164, his sons took over where he left off and eventually won Skye in 1209.

In the same period the situation was quieter in the Orkney earldom, where all that is really recorded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century is the succession of earls. However, in 1195 King Sverre of Norway placed Shetland directly under the Norwegian throne as redress for the Orkney Earls' rebellion the previous year. In the following years from 1197-1202 Scottish incursions caused the earldom to lose all its remaining possessions, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Moray on the mainland. From then on, the importance of the Earldom of Orkney dwindled even more and it lingered on as a Scandinavian outpost for the next two and a half centuries. However, in

1468 Orkney and Shetland were eventually put up as collateral for a dowry for King Christian II of Denmark and Norway's daughter (who married the Scottish king). The Scottish King annexed the islands in 1468-70.<sup>24</sup>

The ousting of the Earls of Orkney from the mainland in 1202 nurtured the ambitions of the Scottish kings to conquer Man and the Hebrides, in order to be finally rid of the Scandinavian menace in the area. The Scandinavians were, however, able to resist any attempts at conquest by the Scottish kings for about five decades but in 1265, following the undecided battle at Largs in 1263, King Magnus Hakonsson of Norway ceded the Kingdom of Man and the Hebrides to the Scottish throne in 1265.<sup>25</sup> This deal in effect ended the Scandinavian adventure in the Hebrides and the Irish Sea. Scotland eventually gained control of the Hebrides and Man in 1266, and of Orkney and Shetland in 1470.

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24. Crawford, Barbara E., 'The Earldom of Orkney and Lordship of Shetland: A reinterpretation of their pledging to Scotland in 1467-70', in *Saga Book of the Viking Society*, vol. xvii, (London, 1966-9), p. 165.

25. 'Chronicle of Melrose, p. 215', in *ESSH*, vol. ii. pp. 649-50.

## 2. Origin and appellative usage

### 2.1. Origin

ON *bólstaðr*, m., is a compound of ON *ból*, n., and ON *staðr*, m. It belongs to the class of masculine i-stems. The *bólstaðr*-paradigm needs a little explanation. As mentioned above, it belongs to the group of masculine so-called i-stems – because they had an -i- in their stem-suffix in Primitive Norse (PN). Hence, the PN form of *bólstaðr* would have been *\*bōlstadiR*. Under normal circumstances, the -i- would have promoted an i-umlaut, causing the preceding back vowel [-a-] to undergo fronting while the i-stem-suffix element itself would be syncopated. However, as is evident from the *bólstaðr*-paradigm, the stem-suffix element has been syncopated and the preceding back vowel has not been affected by i-umlaut, being situated in a short stem-syllable. The [ø] of the dative plural form is the result of u-umlaut.

The first element of the compound, ON *ból*, n., had a variety of meanings, such as 1) 'land that is settled and cultivated, farm'; 2) 'dwelling'; 3) 'night quarters, sleeping place'; 4) 'lair, den, sty'.<sup>26</sup> *Ból* appears to be related to the verb, ON *búa*, which carries the meanings of 'to live at/in', 'to have a house', etc. This means that the original notion would presumably relate to the concept of an *abode* of greater or lesser permanency.

ON *staðr*, m., has an even greater span of meanings. It carries such diverse ones as: 1) 'the act of standing, stopping', 2) 'a strength, a resistance', 3) 'an end, outcome', 4) 'a place', 5) 'a place where something stands', 6) 'a place where one resides permanently', 7), 'a village, a town' 8), 'a lot, a part' 9), 'a holy place or site' etc.<sup>27</sup> It is related to the verb, ON *standa*, 'to stand, remain, resist', etc.<sup>28</sup> With such a diversity of meanings, it is naturally hard to find out precisely which meaning *staðr* carried when it entered into the compound with *ból*. The most obvious meanings in this respect would be those relating to 'a place'. Even so, the meanings relating to 'a place' are themselves rather diverse. The type of place to which

26. I have chosen to list the various meanings of *ból* as they appear in *ONP*, vol. 2: *ban-da*, (København, 2000), cols 570-71, solely because it is the most recent work.

27. *Ibid.*, vol. 3., pp. 509-12; Heggstad, L., Hødnebo, F. & Simensen, E., *Norrøn ordbok*, (Oslo, 1975), p. 406.

28. Cf. Heggstad, L., Hødnebo, F. & Simensen, E., *Norrøn ordbok*, (Oslo, 1975), pp. 407-8.

*staðr* may refer is either 'where something stands' (no. 5) or 'where one resides permanently' (nos 6 & 7), 'a divided lot' (no. 8), 'a holy place' (no. 9) or simply 'a place' (no. 4). It is impossible to say which of these meanings is the original one, bar that this was apparently 'a place' of sorts. At least, nothing speaks against this.

The above paragraphs have shown that the original meaning of *bólstaðr* is not altogether straightforward. The two elements of which it is compounded are common and each one carries a range of meanings. The core meaning of *ból* seems to have been that of an abode, but *ból* also carried derived meanings that related to 'cultivated and settled land' whereas *staðr* carries the general notion of 'a place'. Since any of the connotations connected to *ból* is capable, theoretically, of having been active when compounded with *staðr*, it goes without saying that any attempt at deducing an original meaning of *bólstaðr* will have to be approached with the utmost caution. Since *bólstaðr* has been used mostly of farms, I would tentatively suggest that *ból* may have carried the connotation of 'cultivated and settled land, farm'. Therefore, an original meaning along the lines of 'the place with the cultivated and settled land, farm' may be cautiously suggested. How 'place' should be conceived is unclear. It could refer to the farm building(s) on the cultivated land, to the cultivated and settled area, or it could indeed refer to a section of an entire cultivated and settled area – in which case *bólstaðr* would refer to a subdivision of a township or farm, etc.

## 2.2. Appellative usage

We have seen above that there is no clear-cut definition of ON *bólstaðr*, m. The next step is to analyse what meanings are carried by this appellative in literature. However, even the literary references are not unequivocal. It is often difficult to determine if 'a dwelling' or 'a farm' is the more precise meaning of *bólstaðr*. The following excerpt aptly shows how ambiguous the application of *bólstaðr* may be:

... Skallagrimr gekk til at sea hvar kistan hafði aa land komit.  
Hvæðizt honum svo at skamt þadann mundi vera *bolstadr* góðr ...<sup>29</sup>

29. Jónsson, Finnur, *Landnámabók (1-3): Hauksbók, Sturlubók, Melabók m. m.* (København, 1900), p. 139 (version: *LdnSr*, AM 107). This version was written down around 1600-1700. The earliest surviving version of the *Landnámabók* is from the 14th century. In all the following excerpts and translations of excerpts, the word *bólstaðr* and its translation will be italicised.

... Skallagrímr went to see where the chest had come ashore. He thought that within a short distance of there would be a good *place for a farm/dwelling* ... [my translation]

Here there is no direct way of determining whether the meaning of *bólstaðr* is 'place for a dwelling' or 'place for a farm'. This passage is based on *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, although the wording is not exactly the same. Instead of the phrase: 'mundi vera *bólstaðr* góðr', *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* has: '*bólstaðargjörd* góð mundi vera'.<sup>30</sup> This has been translated as 'a good place for building his [Egils] home'.<sup>31</sup> As with the *Landnámabók* excerpt, it is not entirely evident what is referred to. However, since Skallagrímr was one of the original settlers, the indirect evidence makes it possible that what is meant is 'a farm'.

A similar use of *bólstaðr* can be seen in *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*. Here, the reference is probably to *farms*:

Hon [Hel] a þar mikla *bolstapi* ok erv garþar hennar forkvnar hafir ok grindr storar ...<sup>32</sup>

She [Hel] has there large *farms* and her fences are exceedingly high and her gates are great ... [my translation]

When *bólstaðr* occurs in law texts, the connotation also appears to be that of 'a farm', but normally with the implicit notion of 'a farm and its land'. In a legal context this is not surprising, as a farm has significance only with its land-holdings. In *Grágás*, the late 13<sup>th</sup>-century compilation of Icelandic law, *bólstaðr* is frequently used in this sense:

Vatn skal oc falla til *bolstaða* allra. enda skal allr saman fara hvers þeirra landz hlutr ...<sup>33</sup>

Water must flow to all *farms*; and it shall all flow through the territory of each [farm] ... [my translation]

30. Jónsson, Finnur, *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar tilligemeds Egils störra kvad*, (København, 1886-8), p. 90.

31. *Egils saga*. Translated and edited by Christine Fell; poems translated by John Lucas, (London, 1993), p. 40.

32. Jónsson, Finnur, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, (Copenhagen, 1931), p. 35.

33. Finsen, V., *Grágás efter det Arnemagnæanske Haandskrift Nr. 334 fol., Staðarhólsbók*, (Copenhagen, 1879.), p. 447. (*GrgStað*).



Ef *bolstaðr* er lagðr i auðn. oc scal þat þo bygt bol heita.<sup>34</sup>

If a *farm* has been abandoned; and it is still to be termed a settled farm; ... [my translation]

En ef land er eigi með vatta handsalat. þa er sem okeyft se. ef þat er halfr *bolstaðr* eða meire hlutr þes bóls er bölt se á.<sup>35</sup>

But if land is [traded] without a witnessed handshake/agreement; then it is as if unsold; if this is half of the *farm* or more than the part of the farm which appears to be inhabitable ... [my translation]

The examples from the above excerpts signify the notion of ‘a farm’, but what type of farm? Do the *Grágás* examples give us more clues to the original meaning of *bólstaðr*? Some of the references seem to mean simply ‘a farm’. The first of the above excerpts, which states the general water rights for farms and households, is a good representative of this. In other instances, the context places an emphasis on the land of a farm – the land of the farm is not focused on until in the following phrase. The second excerpt, on the other hand, discusses what measures have to be taken if the lands of a farm have become unproductive. So here the connotation must be ‘a farm with its land/property’. The same goes for the third excerpt, although here the emphasis may be slightly more on the land itself. These examples are indicative of an appellative which carried the general notion of ‘a farm’ but occasionally with the more specialised connotation of a ‘landed farm’. This connotation is especially evidenced in legal texts, where the entire farm entity (buildings and property) is of importance.

All the above examples are from Icelandic sources. The use of *bólstaðr* as an appellative apparently continued longer here than in Norway. Nevertheless, a few documentary sources exist in the *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, mostly from the Jämtland area but also from Hedmark, in which *bólstaðr* is used in the general sense of a farm. For example, one document speaks of the King’s Meadow, *Kongsengen*, which:

... hefuir wt verit tekin af Auflangharuðz *boollstað*, eðr ok Sueinaruðz *boolstaaðe* ...<sup>36</sup>

34. *GrGStað*, p. 419.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 418.

36. *DN II*, pp. 257-8. The document is dated February 10th 1353.

... has been taken out of the *farm* of Aflangerud or also of the *farm* of Sveinarud ... [*my translation*]

Another document relating to the sale of a farm states:

... Thy skal iach thet forscripna halfua Skuto med allom tillaghom undan mik og minom arfwom och vndir Gregers oc hans arfwa til æwerdelica ægho om alle rettogheet som then *boolstadene* bør a fylghia.<sup>37</sup>

... Then I shall [cede] the above mentioned one half of Skute with all appurtenances from me and my heirs to Gregers and his heirs for everlasting ownership with all the rights belonging to that *farm*. [*my translation*]

From the way this appellative is used in Norway, there does not seem to be any connotative difference between the Norwegian and the Icelandic usage.<sup>38</sup> This can really only mean that the known appellative use of *bólstaðr* corresponds generally to that of 'a farm', albeit sometimes with an emphasis on the land as well – at least in a legal context. However, a considerable time has lapsed between this element's being an active constituent of the onomasticon and its featuring as an appellative. Therefore, one should be cautious of accepting the typical known connotation of *bólstaðr* as being equal to its denotation in place-names.

To conclude, the general meaning of *bólstaðr* as an appellative is that of 'a farm (buildings and property)'. This general meaning is in good accordance with the fact that onomastically *bólstaðr* was used of farms. However, owing to its late appearance in the written sources, the general connotation of this element may not equal its original connotation(s) or necessarily its denotation as a place-name element. It is worth pointing out that there is a probable gap of at least four centuries between any original connotation and its appearing in written sources.

The known appellative usage of *bólstaðr* in West Scandinavian is mostly late Medieval, and undoubtedly it may also have been used in this way during the Viking Age and possibly slightly earlier. There is nothing

37. *DN VI*, dated: Lockne, 19. Feb. 1441.

38. See e.g. also *DN*, vol. III, p. 498; vol. VI, pp. 510 & 511-2, for similar applications of ON *bólstaðr*, m.

in *bólstaðr* that would contradict this assumption. It is a compound of common and well-known Old Norse linguistic elements; its existence as a living Norwegian appellative element, however, seems to have been ebbing out in the Middle Ages. It is possible that its dwindling into a general term for 'a farm' aided its demise, for general terms for farms abound and only the most appropriate ones at a given time survive, so *bólstaðr* appears to have been the victim of becoming a 'redundant' appellative. In Icelandic, *bólstaður*, m., is still known in the sense of a farm but it is often confused with the now more common Icel. *bústaður*, m., today with the same connotations.<sup>39</sup> It seems that Icel. *bólstaður* is slowly suffering the same fate as its Norwegian equivalent.

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39. Cf. Cleasby, R., Vigfusson, G. & Craigie, W. A., *An Icelandic-English dictionary*, (Oxford, 1957), p. 74; Blöndal, Sigfús, *Íslandsk-dansk ordbog*, (Reykjavík, 1920-4), p. 95.

### 3. Place-names in *-bólstaðr* in Norway

#### 3.1. The element *-bólstaðr* in Norway

##### Geography

This section is intended as a brief introduction to the geology and geography of the areas of study. The following works have been consulted for this sub-chapter: Steen B. Böcher & Aage H. Kampp, *Verdens geografi. Natur – Kultur – Befolkning, 1. Europa*, (Copenhagen, 1975); N. Knatrup, *Fennoskandia. Norges, Sveriges og Finlands geografi*, (Copenhagen, 1973) and *Nationalencyklopedin*, (Höganäs, 1989-96), vol. 6, p. 265 and vol. 9, p. 600.

Norway occupies the western part of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Administratively, present day Norway consists of 19 counties or *fylker*.<sup>40</sup> The distance – as the crow flies – between the southernmost tip, Egersund, and the northernmost extreme, Vardøy, is 1,800 kilometres. The oblong shape of Norway makes borders extremely long. To the east, Norway borders Sweden, to the north, Finland and Russia. The western and southern areas are bordered by the North Atlantic, the North Sea, and Skagerrak.

The Norwegian underground is extremely varied and even in areas with relatively uniform bedrock, considerable outcrops of other rock-types may be found. The most dominant geological feature in the country, the Scandinavian Mountain Range, runs like a backbone down Norway. This feature consists mainly of sandstone and slate. In the southern and eastern interior, granite is the most common type of rock, whereas the western parts are dominated by gneiss, which is also found in substantial outcrops in the south-eastern part of the country. These rock types contribute to the varied appearance of the Norwegian landscape but they constitute no more

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40. The counties of Norway are: *Eastern Norway*: Østfold fylke, Akershus fylke, Oslo fylke, Hedmark fylke, Oppland fylke, Buskerud fylke, Vestfold fylke, Telemark fylke; *Southern Norway*: Aust-Agder fylke, Vest-Agder fylke; *Western Norway*: Rogaland fylke, Hordaland fylke, Sogn og Fjordane fylke, Møre og Romsdal fylke; *Trøndelag*: Sør-Trøndelag fylke, Nor-Trøndelag fylke; *Northern Norway*: Nordland fylke, Troms fylke, and Finnmark fylke.

than the framework of the landscape. The present Norwegian landscape has in fact been shaped by a much younger and more radical factor: glaciation.

During the Ice Age, all of Scandinavia was at one time or another covered by a giant ice cap. The thickest cover was found over the northern highlands, the highest peaks of which were situated to the east of the present ridge of the Scandinavian Mountain Range. On the east side of the Scandinavian Mountain Range the ice cap spread over a vast area. Here, glacial erosion has been moderate. This means that the valleys in the south-east and south of Norway are broad and moderately sloped with fertile moraine deposits on the valley sides. In contrast, the western side of the Scandinavian Mountain Range ridge has been much affected by glacial erosion. From the mountain plateau, forward-thrusting tongues of ice have eroded their way down into the already existing riverbeds and cut deep into the underlying bedrock. When the ice cap melted away, the sea level rose and the eroded riverbeds became the steep-sided fiords of western Norway.

On the east side of the mountain range, that is in eastern and south-eastern Norway, the landscape has retained an undulating character with broad valleys with moderately sloping sides, only interrupted by oblong-shaped lakes. Here the erosion has only been slight so that the morainic layer is still intact on the sides of the valleys, although it has caused substantial sand and gravel deposits at the bottom of the valley floors. The valley sides are often wooded, where not cultivated. The distribution of morainic soil layers has created a particular pattern of settlement. There are only a few farms on the valley floors owing to the poor quality of the soil there. Instead, the farms are generally situated up the slopes of the valley, the morainic soils being better suited for agriculture. The settlements are usually scattered single-farms. With the cultivated farms on the fertile land, the pastoral economy is confined to the poorer soils, either higher up near the plateau ridge or down on the valley floors.

To the west of the Scandinavian Mountain Range, the situation is quite different. The severe glacial erosion has meant that the area is decidedly mountainous. The ice cap has had enough force to carve out steep-sided valleys and carry all the eroded material away out into the sea. Therefore, the valley sides are generally too steep for later eroded material to be deposited on them. Instead, the valley floors are the only places where the landscape is of a gradient gentle enough to allow for melt water and river deposits. This means that the settlement structure is completely different. Since the only tracts of arable land are situated on the valley floors, clus-

ters of sparse settlement are found there. The pastoral economy is found in the same area as the arable economy, again on the poorer land. There is only very little scattered settlement outside of the valley floors in areas where the conditions have allowed for some deposition of eroded material. Farming in these regions normally relies on supplementing the economy by e.g. fishing.

One area west of the Scandinavian Mountain Range forms, however, an exception to the general picture. In parts of Trøndelag, especially Nord-Trøndelag, a substantial part of the land was submerged below sea level during the Ice Age. As a consequence, these submersed areas received vast quantities of sediment. When the ice cap retracted, a general land rising took place in the area, yielding plenty of good quality farming land because of a generous layer of nutritious soil. The affected areas in Trøndelag thus stand out in marked contrast to the general picture of farming land being scarce and available only on valley floors.

### Dissemination

In this study I have found that there are 108 localities which contain or possibly contain a name in *bólstaðr* in Norway (see fig. 2). The distribution of these localities is far from even, although this place-name element is represented in all the Norwegian fylker, apart from those of Østfold, Oslo and Finnmark. The greatest concentration is found in Western Norway, in particular in the counties of Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane and Møre og Romsdal with eleven, twenty and twenty-seven *bólstaðr*-localities, respectively. The county of Rogaland is, however, only poorly represented by four localities, and is as such more like the southern and eastern Norwegian counties. Taken as a whole this western region is by far the best represented with no less than sixty-two of the 108 localities with names in *bólstaðr* in Norway, or no less than 57% of the entire Norwegian material!

The southern Norwegian counties, Aust-Agder and Vest-Agder are represented by three localities of this type each, whereas *bólstaðr* is represented in eastern Norway by one each in Telemark and Vestfold, two examples in Akershus and the same number in Buskerud. The greatest concentration of *bólstaðr*-localities in eastern Norway is found in the inland counties of Hedmark and Oppland, represented by five and six localities, respectively. The tally of names is thus six for southern Norway (5½%) and seventeen for eastern Norway (16%).

Considering the high number of localities with names in *bólstaðr* in Western Norway, it would have been natural to assume that its northern



Fig. 2. The distribution of place-names in Old Norse *bólstaðr* in Norway.

neighbour, Trøndelag, would feature a similar concentration of localities. The reality, however, is that only seven *bólstaðr*-localities are known from Trøndelag, or 6½% of the material. Sør-Trøndelag has four localities, whereas three are found in Nord-Trøndelag.

An altogether greater concentration of localities bearing a name in *bólstaðr* is found in the Northern Norwegian counties of Nordland and Troms. There are sixteen known examples from this area, or 15% of the material. Ten of the *bólstaðr*-localities are found in Nordland, where they are scattered throughout the coastal area of the county. The remaining six are situated in Troms in an area from Hinnøya to Senja.

As it is clear from the above, the distribution of localities with a name in *bólstaðr* is far from uniform throughout Norway. More than half of the entire material is found in the region of Western Norway. The reason for this overweight of *bólstaðrs* in this area is not known. However, since the greatest concentrations are found in areas where arable land is at a premium, it could be speculated that its popularity there is not only owing to local naming preferences but possibly also related in some way to the structure of farming and farm development.

### Previous research

The interest in place-names in Norway developed in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This can be seen as a result of the general rise in nationalism throughout Europe during that century. The search for and focus on one's national identity in the past of one's homeland would have been particularly important for Norway, which had only just then gained its independence.

From the start, the focus was on the oldest layers of place-names; Iron-Age and Viking-Age place-names were at the heart of research. Names in ON *-vin*, ON *-heimr*, ON *-land*, ON *-staðir*, and ON *-setr*, were therefore under close scrutiny. Unfortunately, ON *bólstaðr* did not receive nearly as much attention as the above-mentioned place-name elements. This was partly because of the relatively small number of names of this type and partly because of the fact that *bólstaðr*-names were regarded as relatively unproblematic and were not seen as containing specific-material of much interest.

About half of the names are compounded with ON *mikill*, adj., and some 10-15% with ON *heilagr*, adj. Thus these two specifics constitute almost two-thirds of the *bólstaðr*-names of Norway. Nonetheless, ON *bólstaðr* has not been entirely without interest for the place-name researchers, as the following research overview will show:



The first scholar to discuss ON *bólstaðr* as a place-name element, albeit briefly, was the archaeologist and place-name researcher **Karl Rygh** in his thesis *Bemerkninger om stedsnavnene i den søndre del af Helgeland* (Kristiania, 1871 (reprinted 1989)). He mentions ON *bólstaðr* in connection with his examination of ON *staðir*. He notes:

... it is worth mentioning that when it [i.e. ON *staðir*] is compounded with *ból*, the singular form is always used (*Bólstaðr*, *Myklibólstaðr*, *Bersab.*, *Haugab.*, *Helgib.*, etc.). The reason can hardly be any other than that this addition [i.e. *ból*] expresses a notion of a certain location with a fully built farm (*bær*). [*my translation*]<sup>41</sup>

What strikes one about this article is how modern it is as compared with much other onomastic literature from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rygh is here the first to express the idea of ON *bólstaðr* referring to a single farmstead with its own tract of land. As such, the farm-name reference of ON *bólstaðr* is different from ON *staðir*. With its plural form, ON *staðir* expresses something more indefinite and would, therefore, from Rygh's point of view, be more likely to refer to a number of settlements or a part of a township in which a number of farms were situated.

The next work to deal with this place-name element in some detail is **Magnus Olsen's** *Ættegård og Helligdom*, (Oslo, 1926). In this work, the author, with great scholarly skill and a healthy portion of imaginative thinking, discusses the most important farm-names and place-name elements of the pre-Christian period. Although his point of focus is the names in ON *-vin*, *-heimr*, *-land*, *-staðir*, *-setr* and *-rud*, he also comments on a number of other place-name elements of importance. Among these features also ON *bólstaðr*.

According to Magnus Olsen, the use of ON *bólstaðr* in place-names has been guided by the structure of farms and farming in the various parts of Norway. Where the amount of farming land was limited, the various farms

41. In Norwegian it reads as follows: "... det er verdt at merke, at naar den sammensettes med *ból*, bruges altid entalsformen (*Bólstaðr*, *Myklibólstaðr*, *Bersab.*, *Haugab.*, *Helgib.*, osv.). Grunden kan ei være nogen anden, end at denne tilføjelse netop giver begrebet af en bestemt plads med en fuldbygget gaard (*bær*).".

had to divide the land between themselves in small, scattered plots. This created a farmstead structure with the settlement in one place and the land spread out throughout the township. Wherever there was an exception, i.e. where the cultivatable land happened to be situated around the farm settlement, *bólstaðr* would be the appropriate term for the settlement. In other words, Magnus Olsen identified a *bólstaðr*-settlement as a single farm with its own arable land in the immediate vicinity of the settlement site.

Olsen had deduced this quite precise settlement structure from a number of points, chiefly those made by P. E. Bergfalck,<sup>42</sup> and more importantly, he derives his findings from the topographical evidence. Most of the *bólstaðr*-farms (ca. 80%) are found in the more infertile parts, such as in the coastal areas of western Norway. *Bólstaðr*-farms are almost absent from the eastern Norwegian areas and the more wealthy Trøndelag areas. This distribution of *bólstaðr*-names is understandable when one takes into consideration that the farming structure in western Norway is that of farms with tracts of land scattered throughout the township.

Early on in its productive life span, the *bólstaðr*-farm undergoes a change in denotation, owing to its special character in the township. *Bólstaðr* has come to signify a particular farm-type: the independent farm; the one-farm farm. To Olsen, this shift in denotation is the reason why *bólstaðr* becomes a typical word for 'farm' in the Norwegian colonies, as is evident in e.g. Iceland.

In his informative section on ON *bólstaðr* and its application as a farm-name in Norway and the colonies, Magnus Olsen writes from the viewpoint of the settlement historian and not the place-name researcher. This is probably what accounts for his omission to cite evidence for e.g. the denotation change in the use of *bólstaðr* from the Norwegian homeland to its application in the colonies. Still, Magnus Olsen's work is one of the more innovative pieces of research into ON *bólstaðr* in Norwegian place-name research.

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42. Cf. Bergfalck, Pehr Erik, *Om Svenska Jordens beskattning: till och med början af 17:de århundradet*, (Dissertation, Uppsala, 1832), p. 66: "The names, which in our old laws are most often used about settled, independent, land possessions, are *bol*, *bolstad* and *by*, of which the former was mostly used about one lot in an area of split-up possessions; the latter two of coherent areas within definite borders." [*my translation*].

A few years later, in 1929, A. W. Brøgger argues that the place-names found in the former Norse colonies in Scotland show where the immigrants to these places originated from in Norway. In his work: *Ancient Emigrants. A History of the Norse Settlements of Scotland*, (Oxford, 1929), he analyses ON *bólstaðr* as 'a dwelling-place, a house'. Brøgger argues that although ON *bólstaðr*, together with ON *setr* and ON *staðir*, may be of a secondary nature in Norway, this early development in Norway cannot be transferred to Scotland, as the Norwegian situation does not apply there. He finds that ON *bólstaðr*, ON *setr*, and ON *staðir* all signify primary naming elements in Scotland: "the farm, the dwelling-place, the place."

Brøgger sees no reason to assume that *bólstaðr* in Norway was used as a collective name for small farms clustering together to form one domain. He supports his view with reference to the facts that: 1) most *bólstaðr* names have ON *mikli* (50%) or ON *helgi* (18%) as specifics. 2) Names in ON *setr* outnumber names in ON *bólstaðr* in the proportion 10:1. 3) Many districts in Norway have names in ON *setr*, ON *land*, ON *staðir*, whereas there are no district names compounded with ON *bólstaðr*. Brøgger finds that "during the 8<sup>th</sup> century along the whole of the west coast of Norway *bolstad* was the farm, ranking in dignity as if it were the old family estate."<sup>43</sup> Brøgger assumes that the emigrants to Shetland primarily originated from Møre rather than from elsewhere in Norway, owing to the overwhelming concentration of names in ON *setr* and ON *bólstaðr* there.

These ideas of Brøgger's are intriguing, but the great drawback of his work is that he does very little to support his theories with facts. As far as can be made out, he uses no documentary evidence to back up his analyses, and he thus often misinterprets his material. Nevertheless, he shows good sense in cautioning us not to let the development of Norwegian place-name generics form the basis of analysis in a Scottish context.

### 3.2. The phonetic development of *-bólstaðr* in Norway

The diversity of the Norwegian dialects has resulted in a multitude of modern representations of original *bolstad*-names. The Norwegian dialects may be divided into four main groups: *West Norwegian*, which

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43. Brøgger, A. W., *Ancient Emigrants. A History of the Norse Settlements of Scotland*, (Oxford, 1929), p. 80.

includes: southern Telemark fylke, Aust Agder fylke, Vest Agder fylke, Rogaland fylke, Hordaland fylke, Sogn og Fjordane fylke, southern Møre og Romsdal fylke; *Trønder Norwegian* which includes: northern Møre og Romsdal fylke, Sør-Trøndelag fylke and Nord-Trøndelag fylke; *North Norwegian*, being: Nordland fylke, Troms fylke and Finnmark fylke; and *East Norwegian*, found in Vestfold fylke, Østfold fylke, Akershus fylke, Buskerud fylke, Oppland fylke and Hedmark fylke. This division of Norway into four major dialectal areas is, naturally, only a rough approximation, and every major dialect has several sub-dialects. It is outside the scope of this book to account for the different dialects, and several works have already covered the subject adequately.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, whenever a dialectal feature is relevant for the interpretation of one or several *bólstaðr*-names, it will be accounted for under the said name or group of names.

It is a common feature of all the simplex formations that the modern pronunciation always ends in [-sta], the original ensuing [-ð(-)] having been lost early owing to its final unstressed position (Skard, vol. I, 1967, p. 145). Otherwise, simplex ON *bólstaðr*, m., may develop in two main ways. Usually, ON [-o:-] is retained until after c. 1100, when it is shortened to [-o-] before the consonant cluster [-lst-] (Seip 1955, p. 112). That the change is somewhat late is evident in the way the short vowel has retained the closed quality of the original long vowel. Had the change occurred early, that is during the late ON – early middle Norwegian period, the short vowel sound would have been unrounded and lowered to [-å-] (Skard, vol. 1., 1967, p. 143; Seip, 1955, p. 112). A sub-development, fronting of [-o-] to [-ø-], is found in a limited area of western Hedmark fylke (Åmot sokn and Øvre Rendal sokn) and must be considered to be a sporadic change (Jahr 1990, p. 105). Since the reduction of a long vowel before a consonant cluster is not carried out uniformly and automatically, there are a few instances where the original long vowel sound, [-o:-], has been retained. Original ON [-l-] is usually retained in modern pronunciations of simplex names. However, ON [-l-] has become a so-called ‘thick’ [-ɫ-] in east Norwegian, as is typical for its dialects (Christiansen 1976, pp. 102 & 199; Sandøy 1985, pp. 184-5; Jahr 1990, pp. 11-3). Nevertheless,

44. I am indebted, for example, to: Christiansen, Hallfrid, *Norske dialekter* (Oslo, 1976) and Jahr, Ernst Håkon (ed.), *Den store dialektboka*, (Oslo, 1990).

ON [-l-] occupies a somewhat weak position, being part of the consonant cluster [-lst-]. As a result of this, the lateral [-l-] has recently been lost in *Bolstad* ([*ˈbosta*]), Oppstryn sokn, Sogn og Fjordane fylke. This loss has also occurred with simplex *bólstaðr*-formations in the British Isles (see Ch. 4.2., below).

In compound formations, the situation is somewhat different. Since *bolstad* is always the generic element, i.e. the final part of a compound, in Norway, it will usually only receive secondary stress, as in any other Germanic language.<sup>45</sup> This means that the generic element will be more liable to change. As in the simplex names the final unstressed part, [-ð(-)], has been lost as a matter of course (Skard, vol. I, 1967, p. 145). Often the preceding [-a(-)] has also been lost (Christiansen 1976, p. 185-92), thereby effectively reducing *bólstaðr* to one syllable (as in e.g. *Myklebust*, Ålfoten sn., which is pronounced [*ˈmykklebåsst*]). There is no specific system to indicate when [-a] is lost in final position, as this feature may be found in names with both monosyllabic and disyllabic modern specific elements. In the same way, a modern disyllabic generic element can be preceded by both one and two syllables. As a result, the modern pronunciations of *bólstaðr*-compounds may have from two to four syllables, although a trisyllabic structure is the most common. Early on, ON [-l-] was lost because of its weak position in the consonant cluster [-lst-].<sup>46</sup> Judging from source evidence, this change is almost entirely complete by the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although some compounds show /-l/-less forms earlier.<sup>47</sup> In many instances, the ensuing [-s-] sound has been lengthened to [-ss-] to compensate for the loss. ON [-o-] has, as in many simplex formations, been shortened. Unlike the process of shortening in

45. There are a couple of exceptions to this rule. For instance *Myklebust*, Sande sokn, Møre og Romsdal fylke; *Myklebust*, Ørsta sokn, Møre og Romsdal fylke and *Myklebust*, Bremanger sokn, Sogn og Fjordane, have all had the primary stress transferred onto the last syllable. Cf. Christiansen, Hallfrid, *Norske dialekter* (Oslo, 1976), pp. 30-1, for this peculiarity.

46. In cases where the original [-l-] has become east Norwegian [-l-] at an early stage, this 'thick' variety may have survived, as is visible in the compounds *Lillebolstad*, now *Bolstad*, Ringsaker sokn, Hedmark fylke; *Hobbelstad*, Haug sokn, Buskerud fylke and possibly also *Hobbelstad*, Efeløt sokn, also Buskerud fylke.

47. ON [-l-] is the most reliable feature for determining an origin in ON *bólstaðr*, m., and especially for distinguishing a name from an origin in ON *bústaðr*, m. Since much of the documentary evidence is of a late date, and thus /-l/-less, some *bólstaðr*-names cannot be identified with absolute certainty.

simplex names, this shortening has taken place in all compounds in Norway. The reason for this is that an original long vowel is reduced during late ON/early middle Norwegian, when in an unstressed/weakly stressed position (Seip 1955, pp. 112-3). Original [-o:-] seems to have been reduced possibly as late as c. 1350, as the modern vowel sound, [-o-], has usually retained the same closed quality of the original long vowel (Seip 1955 p. 112; Skard vol. I, 1967, p. 143). However, some compounds in south-western Norway, in Rogaland, Hordaland, the area of the Førdefjord valley in Sogn and Fjordane, and south-western Møre og Romsdal, seem to have been shortened at an earlier stage, possibly as early as during the ON period. This is manifested in modern forms in [-å-],<sup>48</sup> instead of [-o-], which must have developed from the middle Norwegian opening and often subsequent lowering of short vowels.<sup>49</sup> In some cases the reduced [-o-] has, according to NG, become fronted to [-u-]. Occurring in some twelve per cent of the total number of possible *bolstad*-compounds, these modern forms are found scattered over most of the Norwegian *bólstaðr*-area. Unfortunately, since only about half of these forms can be said with certainty to originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m., the rest might possibly originate from ON *bústaðr*, m., although the documentary evidence does not normally favour this possibility. The change from reduced [-o-] > [-u-], is probably due to a late a-mutation (Seip 1955, p. 245; Stemshaug 1989, p. 65), or possibly to assimilation to the sound of the stem vowel (cf. the principle described in Sandøy 1985, pp. 191-3). This change is relatively rare and has only been partially successful in so far as some compounds fluctuate between [-u-] and [-o-].<sup>50</sup> Some modern transcriptions also have [-e-] for [-o-] (< ON [-o:-]). This is due to assimilation of the unstressed/weakly stressed vowel to the sound of the preceding vowel (cf. the principle described in Sandøy 1985, pp. 191-3).

48. The [-å-] vowel sound in the names: *Fonnebost*, Lindås sokn, Hordaland fylke; *Nordbustad*, Uggdal sokn, Hordaland fylke and *Ullebust*, Førde sokn, Sogn og Fjordane fylke, may be due to assimilation to the vowel sound of the vowel in the first syllable.

49. Cf. Skard, vol. I., 1967, p. 143. Early shortened original long vowels also took part in this shift.

50. Cf. *Myklebust*, Olden sokn, Sogn og Fjordane fylke and *Myklebust*, Utvik sokn, Sogn og Fjordane fylke.

### 3.3. The Norwegian place-name material

#### Simplex formations:

##### **BOLSTAD**

1. Bolstad, S, (32V) PM 517 311, Setskog sn., Akershus fylke (Akershus Amt).

*Bolstadt* 1578; *Boelstad* 1594; *Bølstad* 1666; *Boelstad* 1723; [*'bo:łsta*] 1901 NG (II, p. 204, no. 151).

2. Bolstad, S, (32V) PN 249 791, Åmot sn., Hedmark fylke (Hedemarkens Amt).

*Bolsta* 1604; *Boelstad* 1667; *Boelstad øvre og nedre* 1723; *Bolstad øvre og nedre* 1900 NG (III, p. 344, no. 17/18); [*'bøłsta*] 1900 NG (III, p. 344, no. 17/18).

3. Bolstad, S, (32V) PN 282 764, Åmot sn., Hedmark fylke (Hedemarkens Amt).

*Bolstadt* 1520 St. (176b); *Boelstad* 1667; [*'bøłsta*] 1900 NG (III, p. 349, no. 48).

4. Bolstad, S, (32V) PP 098 660, Øvre Rendal sn., Hedmark fylke (Hedemarkens Amt).

*Bollstadt* 1593; *Boelstad* 1667; [*'bøłsta*] 1900 NG (III, p. 372, no. 29).

5. Bolstad, S, (32V) LN 334 263, Evanger sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*a Bolstoðom* 1317 DN (I, 132); *i Bolstodum* 1368 DN (I, 307); *i Bollstodum* 1368 DN (I, 366); *i Bolstaudum* 1389 DN (I, 379); *a Bollstodum* 1392 DN (II, 406); *a Bolstauðum* 1400 DN (I, 414); *Bolstader* 1400 DN (I, 415); *Boelstad* 1563; [*'bolsta*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 524, no. 65).

6. Bolstad, S, (32V) LN 308 862, Hålandsdal sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*af Bolstað* c. 1360 BK (67a); *Bolstad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 534); *Boelstadt* 1563; *Nedre Bolsta* 1668; *Bolstad nedre* 1910 NG (XI, p. 194, no. 63); [*'bolsta*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 194, no. 63).

7. Bolstad, S, (32V) LN 868 101, Ulvik sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*Boellstad* 1603; *Boelstaad* 1667; *Bolstad* 1723; [*'bolstå*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 475, no. 33).

8. Bolstad, S, (32V) NN 702 516, Biri sn., Oppland fylke (Kristians Amt).

9. Bolstad, S, (32V) NN 822 728, Lillehammer sn., Oppland fylke (Kristians Amt).

[*'bo:łsta*] 1900 NG (IV/1, p. 221, no. 80).

10. Bolstad, S, (32V) NP 149 563, Vågå sn., Oppland fylke (Kristians Amt), Norway.

*i litlæ Bolstadum* 1412 DN (III, 442); *Bolldstad* 1594; *Bolstadt* 1578 St. (148b); *Boelstad* 1604; *Boelstad* 1723; [*'bo:łsta*] 1900 NG (IV/1, p. 70, no. 6).

11. Bolstad, S, (32V) MP 262 194, Fortun sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*i Bolstodum* c. 1360 BK (38a); *i Bolstad* c. 1360 BK (40a); *i Bollstaudum* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 398); *Bolstadt* 1563; *Baaelstaa* 1603; *Boelstad* 1603; *Bolstad* 1666; [*'bolsta*] 1901 NG (XII, p. 12, no. 20).

12. Bolstad, S, (32V) LN 499 866, Kvamsoy sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Boellstad* 1611; *Boelstad* 1667; *Bolstad* 1723; [*'bolsta*] 1901 NG (XII, p. 166, no. 78).

13. Bolstad, S, (32V) MP 027 672, Oppstryn sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Bolstad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 131); *Bolstadt* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 622); *Boelstedt* 1563; *Bolstad* 1567; *Boelstad* 1667; [*'bosta*] 1901 NG (XII, p. 514, no. 12).

14. Bolstad, S, (32V) NM 672 081, Sande sn., Vestfold fylke (Jarlsberg og Larvik Amt).

*i Boostadhom* c. 1400 Røde Bog (192); *Bollstadte* 1541 DN (VII, 795); *Bollstadt* 1546 DN (II, 853); *Boelstadt* 1547 DN (V, 832); *Boelstad nordre* 1668; *Boelstad søndre og mellom* 1668; [*'bolsta*] 1907 NG (VI, p. 30, no. 37/38).

These names derive from ON *bólstaðr*, m., 'a farm' (cf. NG indl. p. 44; NG II, p. 204). The pronunciations for nos 1, 9, 10, show that the original long stem vowel sound has been retained. Usually, the long stem vowel, [-o:-], underwent shortening owing to the following 'long' triconsonantal combination, [-l-st-], necessitating a short preceding vowel sound, as is visible in nos 2-7, 11-14 (Seip 1955, p. 112). With nos 2-4, the short stem vowel, [-ø-], is result of the following development: firstly, [-o:-] is shortened to [-o-] owing to its position before a consonant cluster (Seip 1955, p. 112), [-o-] then becomes fronted to [-ø-], as happens in certain Norwegian dialects (Jahr 1990, p. 105). The fronting to [-ø-] has not taken place with nos 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, as these are situated outside the area of fronting. No. 13 features the only instance in which a true simplex Norwegian bolstad-name has not retained its medial [-l-] sound. However, this must be a very recent feature as all the written forms feature an -l- (see also Ch. 3.2.).

Some of the early forms of nos 5, 9, 11, show plural forms. The reason



for this is not quite certain, but it is possible that the settlement-areas to which these place-names refer have been considered to consist of more than one settlement. NG lists no. 5 as *Bolstad med Skonsvik*, that is as consisting of two settlements – this might be what is referred to with the plural forms.

Some of the place-names have no early records. Hence, the antiquity of nos 8-10 cannot be established.

### Compound formations:

#### BESSEBOSTAD

Bessebostad, S, (33W) WS 643 428, Trondenes sn., Troms fylke (Tromsø Amt).

*Bersaboolstad* c. 1450 DN (VI, 228); *Bersabolstad* c. 1450 DN (VI, 229); *Bessebostadt* 1610; *Beste Bostad* 1661; *Bæstebostad* 1723; [*bæssbosta*] 1901 NG (XVII, p. 26, no. 107).

K. Rygh (NG XVII, p. 26, no. 107) interprets the specific as the genitive sg. of the ON personal name *Bersi*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 132-3; 1931, cols 163-8). This name is the one notable exception to the rule that Norwegian *bolstad*-names are not compounded with personal names.

The present-day pronunciation is a result of: 1: the ON unrounding of [-e-] to [-æ-], although this is not manifested in writing until much later (Seip 1955, p. 48; Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 143); assimilation of ON [-rs-] > Norw. [-ss-] (Seip, 1955, p. 286; Sandøy 1985, pp. 188-9); 2: weakening of ON [-a-] to [-e-], which was then subsequently dropped. For the rest of the compound, see Ch. 3.2.

The inserted /-t-/ in the 1661 and 1723 entries is probably an attempt to make sense of the place-name. Folk etymology would then have the name to mean 'The best farm'.

#### BRATTEBOLSTAD

Brattebolstad †, S, Kvikne sn., Hedmark fylke (Hedemarkens Amt).

*Bratbostadt* 1520; *Brattebolstaa* 1593; *Brattebolsta* 1604; *Bratbolstad* 1616; *Brateboelstad* 1667; *Bratteboelstad* 1723; [*brattbost*] 1901 NG (III, p. 430, no. 32).

The specific is a form of ON *bratti*, adj., the weak version of ON *brattr*, adj., 'steep' (cf. NG III, p. 430, no. 32). The farm appears not to exist any longer, at least it does not feature on the 1:50,000 map. The pronunciation

is owing to a weakening of the inflectional ending, ON [-i-], or rather [-a-], to [-e-], which was then subsequently lost. For the rest of the compound, see Ch. 3.2.

### FANBOSTAD

Fanbostad †, S, (32V) MQ 09 59, Bolsøy sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*i Fonnebostadum* c. 1440 AB (p. 77s); *Phanebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 91); *Ffannebostad* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 6); *Fanboustaa* 1610; *Fandboustad* 1633; *Fandbostad* 1669; [*fənnbosta*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 280, no. 30).

K. Rygh (NG XIII, pp. 280-1, no. 30) interprets the specific as containing the genitive sg. of a now lost name of the local fiord \**Farni*, m. (now *Fannefjorden*), or less likely from ON *forn*, adj., 'old'. A third possibility could be the genitive sg. of ON *fønn*, f., 'snow, a snow dune' (see *Fonnebost*, Lindås sn., Hordaland fylke, below), but it does not correspond well with the modern pronunciation. Considering the number of names in the area in *Fann*-, such as *Fannefjorden*, \**Fannewatn*, *Fannestranden*, \**Fanaskoghe*) and *Fanbostad* – all with relation to the fiord of Fannefjorden, the former suggestion appears to be the correct one. In spite of the lack of an /-l-/ in the sources, the generic is most probably *bólstaðr*.

The present day pronunciation is owing to: 1: ON [-*rn*-] > [-*nn*-] > [-*nn̥*-]. This palatalisation only occurs in a limited area of western Norway; Møre og Romsdal fylke & western Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Jahr 1990, pp. 64-5); 2: weakening of ON [-*a*-] > [-*e*-] and subsequently lost, owing to its unstressed position.

### FONNEBOST

Fonnebost, S, (32V) KN 918 417, Lindås sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*Funnebolstad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 502); *Fanebostadt* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 461); *Fonnebostadt* 1563; *Fonndebostaid* 1567; *Fonnebost* 1667; *Fonnebust* 1668; [*fådnēbāst*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 416, no. 106).

The specific is most probably ON *forn*, adj., 'old', presumably in the weak declension, *forni* (cf. NG XI, p. 416, no. 106). Another possibility might be ON *fønn*, f., 'snow, a snow dune', in the genitive sg., *fannar*. However, the latter suggestion does not correspond well with the modern pronunciation, which shows differentiation of ON [-*rn*-] > [-*dn*-]. The present-day pronunciation is the result of: 1: ON [-*a*-] > [-*ā*-] but written /-a-/ or /-o-/ (Seip, 1955, pp. 271-2); 2: differentiation of ON [-*rn*-] > [-*dn*-]. This is a local development (cp. *Finnesbø* nearby, pronounced [*fɪdn̥esbø*]),

found only in Hordaland fylke, Rogaland, fylke and inner Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Seip 1955 pp. 285; Jahr 1990, p. 65); 3: weakening of ON [-i]/[-a] > [-e], as a result of its unstressed position (Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 143). For the rest of the compound, see Ch. 3.2., although the present day form of [-â-] for ON [-o:-] might alternatively be owing to an assimilation in sound of the stem vowel.

### GIBOSTAD

Gibostad, S, (33W) CB 850 970, Lenvik sn., Troms fylke (Tromsø Amt). *i Gæighoboolstad* c. 1450 DN (VI, 229); *i Gøighbolstadum* c. 1450 DN (VI, 349); *Giboustaa*, *Gibustaa* 1567; *Giibustad* 1610; *Giiboestad* 1614; *Gibostad* 1661; [*jebosta*] 1911 NG (XVII, p. 100, no. 84).

K. Rygh (NG XVII, p. 100, no. 84 and no. 82) interprets the specific as the genitive sg. of an unrecorded place-name \**Geiga*, f., related to ON *geiga*, vb., 'to skew, to sway, to dangle, to swing'. Rygh suggests this name may be an original fiord-name or, less likely, a stream name. This sounds plausible, considering the other names in the area with specifics of seemingly the same origin: *Giøy* (< *Geigøy*), *Gisundet* (< *Geighosundum*).

The present day pronunciation is the result of, firstly, a reduction of the unstressed genitive sg. ending [-u-] > [-ə-] which is subsequently dropped, and secondly the change of the stemvowel from ON [-ei-] > [-e-], being situated before a palatal consonant, [-g-] (Seip 1955, p. 262), which is later dropped. For the rest of the compound, see Ch. 3.2.

/g-/ is used in Norwegian as an orthographic representation of [j-] before a front vowel (Sandøy 1985, p. 182).

### GRANBOSTAD

Granbostad, S, (33W) UN 905 156, Vassås sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*Granbost* 1559; *Grandbostadt* 1590; *Granbostad* 1669; *Grandbostad* 1723; [*granbossta*] 1905 NG (XVI, p. 8, no. 53).

K. Rygh (NG XVI, p. 8, no. 53) interprets the specific as possibly containing ON *grandi*, m., 'a sand dune, a sandy island or holm' or less likely the genitive pl. of ON *grøn*, f., 'a spruce, a conifer'. Judging from the documentary evidence, the former suggestion seems the most likely. However, since short [-a-] only becomes lengthened before [-nd] in Danish and Swedish, and not usually in Norwegian (Indrebø, Gustav, *Norsk Målsoga*, (Bergen 1951), p. 117), this suggestion seems somewhat problematic. Danish or Swedish influence might account for the present-

day pronunciation, though, especially when considering the former political affiliations of Norway.

The generic is probably *bólstaðr*, although K. Rygh suggests ON *bústaðr*, m., 'a hut, shieling', for no apparent reason, as all the forms fit with the normal development of *bólstaðr*.

### GRYTEBOST

Grytebost, S, (32V) LQ 588 325, Borgund sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Gridebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 106); c. *Grytebostad* 1530 OEJ (p. 3); *Grødebust* 1603; *Grødbostad* 1606; *Grydebostad* 1617; *Grydebust* 1666; *Grytebust* 1723; [*grytebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 192, no. 150).

K. Rygh (NG XIII, p. 192, no. 150) interprets the specific as the genitive sg. of a stream name \**Gryta*, f. (derived from ON *grjót*, n., 'gravel'), which, according to K. Rygh, is a common stream name. Alternatively the specific could be the genitive sg. of ON *gryta*, f., 'a stream with a stony course'. The short stem vowel of the modern pronunciation, however, is problematic.

The change, ON [-y:-] > Norw. [-y-], is unusual, as the stressed syllable usually remains long (Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 89). It is possible that the long compound (once four syllables, now three) has influenced the quantity of the stem vowel. A parallel development seems to have occurred with Sulebust, Hareid sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (see below). The ON fem. genitive sg. inflection [-u] has been reduced to [-e], due to its unstressed position (Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 143). For the rest of the compound, see Ch. 3.2.

### HELBOSTAD, HELGEBOSTAD, HELLEBOSTADT, HELLEBUST, HÆGEBOSTAD

1. Helbostad, S, (32V) LP 921 839, Sunylven sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Hellebost* 1603; *Helleboestad* 1616; *Hellebust* 1666; [*hællbossta*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 104, no. 3).

2. Helbostad, S, (33W) UM 737 769, Høylandet sn., Nord-Trøndelag fylke (Nordre Trondhjems Amt).

*Helboste* 1559; *Helbostadt* 1590; *Helboesta* 1626; *Hallbostad* 1669; *Helbostad* 1723; [*hælbosta*] 1903 NG (XV, p. 301, no. 76).

3. Helbostad, S, (32W) PS 095 210, Ås sn., Nord-Trøndelag fylke (Nordre Trondhjems Amt).

*Helgebostadt* c. 1550 Cap.; *Holbostadt* 1590; *Helboesta* 1626; *Hellbostad*

1643; *Helbostad* 1669; *Helbodstad* 1723 [*hælbosta*] 1903 NG (XV, p. 252, no. 168).

4. Helgebostad, S, (32V) PM 206 747, Holt sn., Akershus fylke (Akershus Amt).

*Hælgobolstad* c. 1400 Røde Bog (261); *Hellebogstad* 1594; *Helgebogstad* 1595 OC (49); [*hæljeboksta*] 1898 NG (II, p. 327, no. 179).

5. Helgebostad, S, (32V) MR 472 491, Dolm sn., Sør-Trøndelag fylke (Søndre Trondhjems Amt).

*Helgabolstadh* c. 1440 AB (p. 16); *Haugabolstad* c. 1440 AB (p. 60); *Helbostadh* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 56); *Hellebostad* 1559; *Helbostadt* 1590; *Helboesta* 1626; *Helboestad* 1630; *Helbusta* 1664; *Helboestad* 1723; [*hællbusta*] 1901 NG (XIV, p. 68, no. 36).

6. Hellebostadt †, S, Norddal sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Hellebostadt* 1606.

7. Hellebostadt †, S, Stranda sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Hellebostadt* 1606.

8. Hellebust, S, (32V) LP 235 795, Vanylven sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Hellebostad* 1603; *Hellebust*, *Søerhelbust* 1666; *Nore Hellebust* 1723; *Søre Hellebust* 1723; [*hællbost*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 9, no. 53/61).

9. Hellebust, S, (32V) LP 051 996, Dale sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Hellebustad* 1603; *Hellebust* 1667; [*hællebåsst*], [*hæ:lebåsst*] 1912 NG (XII, p. 279, no. 104).

10. Hellebust, S, (32V) LP 462 055, Viksdalen sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*a Helgha bolstad* c. 1360 BK (28a); *Helgebostadt* 1563; *Helbustaid* 1567; *Hellebustad* 1603; *Hellebust* 1667; [*hæ:lebåsst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 291, no. 26).

11. Hægebostad, S, (32V) LK 950 683, Hægebostad sn., Vest Agder fylke (Lister og Mandal Amt).

*a Hægabostapum* 1435 DN (XI, 141); *a Helghabothstadh* 1495 DN (VI, 654); *Hegbostadt* 1594; *Hegbostadt* 1612; *Hegbostad* 1668; [*hæ:gebosta*] 1912 NG (IX, pp. 257 & 259, no. 11).

12. Hægebostad, S, (32V) MK 035 513, Vigmostad sn., Vest Agder fylke (Lister og Mandal Amt).

*Helgaboolstader* 1369 DN (VI, 315); *Hegbostedt* 1556 DN (VI, 815); *Hebostadt* 1594; *Hegbostad* 1612; [*hægboستا*] 1912 NG (IX, p. 151, no. 70).

The specific is the weak declension *helgi* of ON *heilagr*, adj., 'holy' (cf. NG IX, p. 151, no. 70), or possibly ON *hella*, f., 'a flat rock, a flat mountain' for nos 1, 6-9, as the sources are not early enough to distinguish between the two suggestions. However, by force of typology, this second suggestion must be regarded as less certain. The specific is not the ON personal name *Helgi*, m./*Helga*, f. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 507-10), as personal names are hardly ever compounded with *bolstad*-names. The generic is *bólstaðr*, although this is slightly less certain for nos 1, 2, 6-9, because of their late appearance in records.

The present day pronunciation is due to: 1: original [-e-] has been opened and lowered to [-æ-] (Indrebø 1951, p. 222; Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 143; Christiansen 1976, p. 91). In the case of nos 9-11 a subsequent lengthening to [-æ:-] has taken place to avoid a short stem syllable because of the reduction of the ensuing consonant cluster; 2: ON [-lg-] may assimilate to [-ll-] (nos 1, 5 & 8), and sometimes subsequently be changed into a dark [-l̥-] (nos 2, 3), or in east Norw. to [-lj-] (no. 4); 3: the inflectional ending has been reduced to [-e-] (nos 4, 9-11), but is mostly lost, owing to its unstressed position. For the rest of the compound, see Ch. 3.2.

**HELGEBOSTAD** see s.n. **HELBOSTAD**

**HELLEBOSTADT** see s.n. **HELBOSTAD**

**HELLEBUST** see s.n. **HELBOSTAD**

**HOBBELSTAD, HOPPESTAD**

1. Hobbelstad, S, (32V) NL 337 915, Efeløt sn., Buskerud fylke (Buskeruds Amt).

*Hoppelstadt* 1566 DN (XV, 829).

2. Hobbelstad, S, (32V) NM 515 275, Haug sn., Buskerud fylke (Buskeruds Amt).

*i Hooboolstadum* 1320 DN (II, 119 (in doc. of 1409)); *i Hooboolstadum* 1394 DN (V, 265); *i Hobolstadhum*, *i Hokolstadum* c. 1400 Røde Bog (87); *i Hobilstadæ* c. 1400 Røde Bog (209s); *til Hopulstadha* 1437 DN (VII, 405); *i Hopulstadum* 1452 DN (V, 560); *Hoppelstadh* 1552 DN (VII, 832); *Hobbiilstadt* 1578; *Hobbelstad* 1593; *Hoppestad* 1595 OC (161); *[håbbe]sta* 1909 NG (V, p. 269, no. 100/101).

3. Hoppestad, S, (32V) NL 323 690, Gjerpen sn., Telemark fylke (Bratsbergs Amt).

*Holbolstadum*, *Hooboolstadum* 1397 DN (III, 393); *Hobølstadum* c. 1400 Røde Bog (38s); *Hoppesstadt* 1585; *Hoppesstad nedre og øvre* 1723; [*håppesta*] 1909 NG (VII, p. 107, no. 12).

The specific is ON *hár*, adj., 'high', or possibly its variant form *hór* (cf. NG V, p. 269, no. 100/101).

ON [-a:-] > [-å:-] (Seip, 1955, p. 147) and then subsequently shortened, due to compound length. The change in no. 3 from ON [-b-] > [-pp-] may possibly be because of analogy with Norwegian *hoppe* 'to jump about'. For the rest of the compound, see Ch. 3.2.

The original settlement of no. 2. is now divided into two farms. This division is possibly an old one, as all the early forms show plural endings, as do those of no. 3.

### **HOPPESTAD see s.n. HOBELSTAD**

### **HÆGEBOSTAD see s.n. HELBOSTAD**

### **LILLEBOLSTAD, LILBOSTAD**

1. Lillebolstad, S, (32V) NN 979 562, Ringsaker sn., Hedmark fylke (Hedemarkens Amt).

*Lillebolsted* 1520; *Lilbostad* c. 1530 OEJ (116); *Lille Bollestad* c. 1577 St. (122b); *Lille Bolstad* 1593; [*lihltbolsta*] 1900 NG (III, p. 27, no. 256).

2. Lillebolstad, S, (32V) NN 822 728, Lillehammer sn., Oppland fylke (Kristians Amt).

*Lille Boelstad* 1668; *Lillebolstad* 1723; *Trangerud / Lillebolstad* 1900 NG (IV/1 p.222, no. 89).

3. Lilbostad, S, (32V) MQ 126 567, Bolsøy sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Lilbostadh* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 91); *Lilbostad* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 6); *Lilbostadt* c. 1550 DN (X, 800); *Lilboustaa* 1610; *Lille Bostad* 1669; *Lilbostad* 1723; [*lihlebosta*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 279, no. 19).

The specific is *lítli*, the weak declension version of ON *lítill*, adj., 'small, little' (cf. NG III, p. 27, no. 256). It is remarkable that the [-l-] sound of the generic has survived in no. 1, as [-l-] is usually lost in compounds of bolstad-names. It is possible that the 'dark' quality of the [-l-] has helped the retention of this consonant. See also Ch. 3.2. For no. 3. ON [-tl-] has become [-ll-] > Fjordamål dial. [-hl-] (Seip 1955, pp. 287-8; Jahr 1990, p. 73); furthermore, the ON inflectional ending has been weakened to [-e] (Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 143).

Two of the settlements which these names refer to have undergone name change. No. 1 is now known as *Bolstad*, whereas no. 2 is called *Trangrud*.

#### LILLEBOSTAD see s.n. LILLEBOLSTAD

#### MEBOST, MIKLEBOSTAD, MYCHLEBOSTADT, MYKLABOLSTADIR, MYKLABUST, MYKLEBOST, MYKLEBOSTAD, MYKLEBUST, MYKLEBUSTAD, MØGELBOSTAD

1. Mebost, S, (32V) PR 081 097, Selbu sn., Sør-Trøndelag fylke (Søndre Trondhjems Amt).

*Møgebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 193); *Myklebostad* c. 1550 Cap.; *Møckelbostadt* 1559; *Møckilbostadt* 1590; *Møgbosta*, *Mobesta*, *Mobostad* 1626; *Meborst* 1668; *Mebust* 1723; [*måbosst*] 1908 NG (XIV, p. 385, no. 95-99).

2. Miklebostad, S, (33W) WR 549 913, Lødingen sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*af Myklabolstad* c. 1440 AB (p. 94); *Møglebosted* 1521 c. NRJ (III, 200); *Mycklebostad* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 21); *Møglebostad*, *Møglebostad* 1567; *Møchelbosta* 1661; *Møchelboestad med Findvig* 1723; [*mekkelbosta*] 1905 NG (XVI, p. 302, no. 39).

3. Miklebostad, S, (33W) WS 962 558, Dyrøy sn., Troms fylke (Tromsø Amt), Norway.

*Michilbostad* 1567; *Møgelbostad* 1614; *Møchelbustad* 1661; *Møchelbostad* 1723; [*mekkelbosta*] 1911 NG (XVII, p. 59, no. 25).

4. Mychlebostadt †/ Bostad, S, (32V) NR 817 328, Bratsberg or Malvik sn., Sør-Trøndelag fylke (Søndre Trondhjems Amt).

*Bostad* ? 1514-21 NRJ (II, 182); *Mychlebostadt* c. 1540 Cap.; *Bostadt* ? 1559; *Bostadt* ? 1590; *Boestad* ? 1667; *Bogstad* ? 1723; [*bosta:n*] ? 1901 NG (XIV, p. 357, no. 25).

5. Myklabolstadir †, S, Heidal sn., Oppland fylke (Kristians Amt).

*Myklabolstadir* 1319 DN (III, 103); *Myklabolstadir* 1323 DN (III, 132); *Prestegaardt* 1520; *Præstegaarden* 1900 NG (IV/1, p. 85, no. 182).

6. Myklabust, S, (32V) KL 933 865, Førdesfjord sn., Rogaland fylke (Stavangers Amt).

*Myckelbostat* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 288); *Myklebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 469); *Møckelbostadt* 1563; *Møgleboust* 1610; *Møglebustad* 1661; [*myggla-båst*], [*magglabåst*] 1915 NG (X, p. 404, no. 80).

7. Myklabust, S, (32V) LL 040 395, Sola sn., Rogaland fylke (Stavangers Amt).



*Møcklebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 254); *Møgebost* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 343); *Møckelbost*, *Møckelbosta* 1563; *Møgleboust* 1610; *Møglebustad* 1616; [*mygglabåst*] 1915 NG (X, p. 138, no. 3).

8. Myklebost †, S, Davik sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Miklabolstad i Kiolesdal* c. 1360 BK (29b); *Kørissdal* 1532 DN (VII, 751); *Kylliðdal* 1603; *Møchlebust/Kiøllesdahl* 1723; [*mykklebåsst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 412, no. 38).

9. Myklebost, S, (32V) LN 012 874, Hyllestad sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*af Miclabolstap* c. 1175 DN (XVI, 1); *Myklibolstadh* 1427 DN (XII, 158); *af Myklabolstadh* c. 1463 DN (XII, 202); *Miklibolstadh* c. 1490 DN (XII, 232); *Møgelbostadt* 1563; *Mychelbustad* 1603; *Møchelbustad* 1608; *Møchelbust* 1667; [*mykklebåsst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 236, no. 79).

10. Myklebostad, S, (32V) MK 447 943, Vegusdal sn., Aust Agder fylke (Nedenes Amt).

*Møglebostadt* 1595; *Møgelbostad* 1601; *Møgleboestad med Stølen* 1668; [*mygglesbossta*] 1905 NG (VIII, p. 169, no. 3).

11. Myklebostad, S, (32V) LM 154 556, Onaheim sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*a Miklabollstad* 1333 DN (IV, 178); *Møckellbostad* 1610; *Møchlebust* 1668; [*møkklebåsst*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 174, no. 131).

12. Myklebostad, S, (32V) MQ 451 548, Vistdal sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*af Myklabolstad* c. 1440 AB (p. 74); *Møglebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 89); *Myglebostad* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 6); *Møckelboustaa* 1610; *Øffre Møchelboestad* 1669; *Nedre Møchelboestad* 1669; *Nere Møchelbostad*, *Over Møchelbost* 1723; [*møkkelbosta*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 263, no. 39/40).

13. Myklebostad, S, (32V) MQ 372 776, Øre sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Møglebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 77); *Møgelbosta* 1559; *Møckilbosta* 1590; *Michelboestad* 1643; *Møchellbosta* 1667; *Møchelbust* 1723; [*møkkelbossta*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 359, no. 21).

14. Myklebostad, S, (33W) VQ 806 706, Bodin sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*af Myklabolstad* c. 1440 AB (p. 92); *Møcklebosted* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 211); *Myklebostad* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 19); *Møglebostad*, *Meckelbostad* 1567; *Møckelbostad* 1610; *Møchelboestad* 1723; [*mekkelbosst*] 1905 NG (XVI, p. 202, no. 26).

15. Myklebostad, S, (33W) VQ 613 342, Gildeskål sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*Møckelbostad* 1614; *Møchelboestad* 1723; [ˈmekkelbosta] 1905 NG (XVI, p. 186, no. 30).

16. Myklebostad, S, (33W) VP 320 547, Nesna sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*Myklebolstade i Sionen* c. 1440 AB (p. 89); *Mickelbostad*, *Myckelbostad* 1567; *Møgelbostad* 1610; *Megbostad* 1614; *Møchelboesta* 1661; *Møchelborstad* 1723; [ˈmøkkelbusta] 1905 NG (XVI, p. 117, no. 41).

17. Myklebostad, S, (33W) WR 005 177, Steigen sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*i Myklabolstad* 1380 DN (VI, 348); *af Myklabolstad* c. 1440 AB (p. 94); *Møcklebosted*, *Møglebosted* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 204); *Myklebostatt* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 19); *Mechklebostad*, *Møcklebostad*, *Moglebostad*, *Møglebostad* 1567; *Møckelbostad* 1614; *Møchelboestad* 1723; [ˈmøkkelbosst] 1905 NG (XVI, p. 252, no. 21).

18. Myklebostad, S, (33W) WR 045 340, Steigen sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*Møcklebosted* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 204); *Mechlebostad*, *Moglebostad* 1567; *Møckelbostad* 1610; *Møchelboestad* 1723; [ˈmøkkelbosst] 1905 NG (XVI, p. 258, no. 72/73).

19. Myklebostad, S, (33W) UN 829 966, Tjøtta sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*Mycklebocstaff* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 17); *Mychelbosta*, *Mickillbostad*, *Miclebostad* 1567; *Møgelbostad* 1610; *Mogbostad* 1614; *Møchelboestad* 1661; *Mochelbostad* 1723; [ˈnokkelbossta] (sic [ˈmøkkelbossta]) 1905 NG (XVI, p. 59, no. 81).

20. Myklebostad, S, (32V) LL 155 242, Høyland sn., Rogaland fylke (Stavangers Amt).

*a Myklabolstodum* 1343 DN (IV, 225); *Møcklebostadt* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 248); *Møckebosta* 1563; *Møgleboust* 1610; *Møglebustad* 1668; [ˈmyggla-båsst] 1915 NG (X, p. 168, no. 25).

21. Myklebust, S, (32V) LM 325 470, Kvinherad sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*Møgelbostad* c. 1521 NRJ (I, 121); *Møglebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 516); *Mogelbosta* 1563; *Møckelbostad* 1610; *Møchelbust* 1668; [ˈmukklebusst] 1910 NG (XI, p. 33, no. 105).

22. Myklebust, S, (32V) LM 250 481, Kvinherad sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*a Miklabolstað* 1314 DN (VIII, 71); *Myklobolstade* 1443 DN (II, 565);

*Møckelbostad* 1610; *Møchlebust* 1668; [*mukklebusst*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 35, no. 123).

23. Myklebust, S, (32V) LQ 605 322, Borgund sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Mykelbolsted* 1495 DN (II, 725); *Møglebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 106); *Myklebostad* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 2); *Møchebost* 1603; *Møckelbostadt* 1606; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*mykklebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 192, no. 153).

24. Myklebust, S, (32V) LQ 703 584, Haram sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Møglebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 97); *Møchelbost* 1603; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*mykklebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 203, no. 1).

25. Myklebust, S, (32V) LQ 258 156, Herøy sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Møglebostad* 1521 c. NRJ (II, 115); *Møckelbostadt* 1606; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*mykklebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 42, no. 37).

26. Myklebust, S, (32V) MQ 139 125, Norddal sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Møchelbost* 1603; *Møckelbostadt* 1606; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*mokklebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 116, no. 9).

27. Myklebust, S, (32V) LQ 263 038, Sande sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Møgbostadh* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 113); *Møglebosted* c. 1521 NRJ (III, 612); *Møchelbost* 1603; *Møckelbostadt* 1606; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*mykklebåsst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 20, no. 18).

28. Myklebust, S, (32V) LQ 605 332, Stranda sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*af Myklabolstad* c. 1440 AB (p. 81); *Møchelbostad* 1603; *Møckelbost* 1606; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*mokklebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 130, no. 41).

29. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 298 881, Søyde sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Møglebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 117); *Miklebostadt* 1548 DN (XII, 764); *Møchelbost* 1603; *Møckelbostadt* 1606; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*mykklebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, pp. 13-4, no. 89).

30. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 171 908, Vanylven sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Møckelbost* 1603; *Møckelbostadt* 1606; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; *Myklebost ytre* 1908 NG (XIII, p. 2, no. 7); [*mykklebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 2, no. 7).

31. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 250 832, Vanylven sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Møckelbost* 1603; *Møckelbostadt* 1606; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; *Myklebost ytre and indre* 1908 NG (XIII, pp. 2/6, nos 7/28).

32. Myklebust, S, (32V) LQ 518 095, Vartdalen sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Myklebostad* c. 1530 OEJ (1); *Møckelbost* 1603; *Møcklebusstad* 1617; *Møchelbust* 1666; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*mykklebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 65, no. 103).

33. Myklebust, S, (32V) LQ 572 004, Ørsta sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Møchelbost* 1603; *Møckelbostadt* 1606; *Møchelbust* 1666; [*mykkle'bosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 90, no. 29).

34. Myklebust, S, (32V) LK 2007 845, Egersund sn., Rogaland fylke (Stavangers Amt).

*Møcklelostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 262); *Myklabostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 267); *Møckelbostad* 1563; *Mycklebust* 1567; *Møgleboust* 1610; *Møgleboust* 1610; *Møglebustad* 1616; *Møglebustad* 1668; [*mykklebåsst*] 1915 NG (X, p. 80, no. 5).

35. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 741 447, Breim sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Møgelbostadt* 1563; *Møckelbostad* 1608; *Møchelbustad* 1667; *Møchelbust* 1723; [*mykkebusst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 491, no. 22).

36. Myklebust, S, (32V) KP 986 494, Bremanger sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Møgelbosta* 1563; *Mickelbustad* 1603; *Møchelbust* 1667; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*mukkle'bust*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 381, no. 45).

37. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 108 043, Dale sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Møglebostad* 1563 NRJ (II, 143); *Mychelbustad* 1603; *Møchlebust med Ødeiorden* 1667; [*mykklebåsst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 236, no. 79).

38. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 419 685, Eid sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Myklebolstad* 1435 DN (I, 543); *Møglebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 126); *Møcklelostadh* 1548 DN (XI, 773); *Møckelbostedt* 1563; *Møchelbust* 1723; [*mykklebosst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 436, no. 44).

39. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 595 244, Helgheim sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Møglebosta* 1563; *Michelbustad* 1603; *Møchelbustad* 1608; *Møchelbost*, *Møchelbust* 1667; [*mykklebåsst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 312, no. 37).

40. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 840 411, Olden sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Myklabost* 1340 DN (IX, 136); *a Myklabolstaðe* c. 1360 BK (12a); *i Myklabostað* c. 1360 BK (11b); *af Miklabolstadh* c. 1490 DN (XII, 222); *Møgelbostadt* 1563; *Møckleboestad* 1603; *Møckelbostad* 1608; *Møchelboestad* 1667; *Møchelbust* 1723; [*'mykklebosst*], [*'mykklebusst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 491, no. 22).

41. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 115 745, Rugsund sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Neder Øffre Møchelboesta* 1667; *Nedre Møchelbust*, *Øfre Møchelbust* 1723; [*'mykklebusst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 424, no. 115/116).

42. Myklebust, S, Selje sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Møckleboesta* 1563; *Field & Backen* 1603; *Møchelboestad* 1667; *Møchellbust* 1723.

43. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 699 548, Utvik sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*a Miklabolstad*, *i Myklabostad* c. 1360 BK (14b); *Møcklebostedt* 1563; *Møckelbostad* 1608; *Møchelboestad* 1667; *Møchlebust* 1723; [*'mykklebusst*], [*'mykklebosst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 504, no. 74).

44. Myklebust, S, (32V) KN 913 975, Øn sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*af Myklabolstadh* c. 1463 DN (XII, 202); *Miklibolstadher* c. 1490 DN (XII, 232); *Møglebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 140); *Møgelbosta* 1563; *Myc-helbustad* 1603; *Møchelbustad* 1608; *Møchlebust* 1667; [*'mykklebåsst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 225, no. 8).

45. Myklebust, S, (32V) LP 249 608, Ålfoten sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*i mykla Boolstadum* 1348 DN (IV, 269); *i Myklabolstað* c. 1360 BK (9a); *i Myklabolstad* c. 1360 BK (17a); *i Miklabolstad* c. 1360 BK (19a); *Møglebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 125); *Møckelbostadt* 1563; *Møckleboestad* 1603; *Møchelbostad* 1667; *Møchelbust* 1723; [*'mykklebåsst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 407, no. 6).

46. Myklebustad, S, (32V) MK 938 989, Holt sn., Aust Agder fylke (Nedenes Amt).

*Møggelbostadt østre*, *Møggelbostadt vestre* 1593; *Møgelboestadt* 1601; *Møgelbostadt østre*, *Møgelbostadt vestre* 1670; [*'møgglebusta*]; [*'mugglebusta*]; [*'møkklebusta*] 1905 NG (VIII, p. 44, no. 28).

47. Møgelbostad †, S, Austad sn., Aust Agder fylke (Nedenes Amt).  
*Møgelbostad* 1611.

The above place-names are compounds of ON *mikill*, adj./*mikli*, adj., 'large, great', or in some cases the variant *mykill*/*mykli*, and ON *bólstaðr*, m. However, there are no less than 47 examples of this type in Norway, which amounts to almost half of all Norwegian *bólstaðr* place-names! An over-frequency of this magnitude raises doubts as to whether this is a place-name type equal to other place-names in *bólstaðr*, and should be carefully investigated. As I see it, there may be three possible explanations for this over-frequency. Firstly, it may be a straightforward place-name compound of *mikill*/*mikli*, adj., and *bólstaðr*, the compound of which made extremely good sense within the naming-situation in Norway. Secondly, the many instances of place-names of this type may be seen as being a type of analogical formation. Thirdly, the over-frequency may reflect the existence of an otherwise unrecorded compound appellative, *\*miklabólstaðr*, used as a (simplex) place-name.

Considering the first possibility, it would be tempting to see the specific element as a reciprocating element. However, there is very little evidence to sustain this assumption. The most obvious element with which to reciprocate would be 'little, small'. However, there are only three *bólstaðr*-names in Lille- (< ON *lítill*/*lítli*) in Norway and none of those can be said to be reciprocating with *mikill*/*mykill*. In general, *bólstaðr* localities do not occur in pairs within a single township in Norway, so reciprocation with another *bólstaðr* locality is not a viable possibility. Still, this does not mean that the names of this type cannot have been coined as genuine compound place-names. The specific element can be seen as pointing out a quality of the locality in relation to nearby localities.

Alternatively, the group may collectively be viewed as analogical formations on an original *\*Miklabólstaðr*. Analogy in varying degrees may be found among certain types of e.g. Scottish *bólstaðr*-place-names, so this is a possibility to take into account too. To me, it seems possible to distinguish between two major types of analogy, either *associative naming* or *imitative naming*. The former is where a place-name is coined purely by association with another place-name without any onomastic considerations in the naming process, whereas the latter type of analogy only steps into force when physical conditions are of such a nature as to spur naming on the model of an already known entity. In other words, the latter type of analogy 'imitates' the structure of an already known name from conditions which could necessitate such a name. This type of analogy is

naturally difficult to distinguish from genuine naming, but if there is the occurrence of a number of similarly originated place-names within a limited area, such as e.g. an island, there is a reason to assume that *associative naming* has been in force. From my study of the physical conditions of Norwegian *bólstaðr* localities (see Ch. 6.2.), there is nothing to indicate that the Norwegian place-names of the *\*Miklabólstaðr*-type are different in settlement-application to other settlements in *bólstaðr*. This means that the over-frequency cannot really be caused by *associative naming*. On the other hand, since localities bearing this name-type all display features common to other *bólstaðr* localities, as well as generally being among the largest, *imitative naming* cannot but be considered a distinct possibility, though impossible to prove.

There is also the possibility that the origin of these place-names is a compound appellative in *\*miklabólstaðr*, m., a place-name construction thereof thus being a simplex formation. Conceding that this is a possibility, there are a number of points which speak against this possibility. Firstly, it has never been attested in literature as an appellative, and although this by no means excludes its existence, this fact still has to be borne in mind. What also speaks against it is, that if it was a compound appellative, why has it ever only been attested as a place-name in the simplex? It would have been natural to assume a specific being added to modify the locality to which this appellative was assigned onomastically. Furthermore, if this was an appellative in its own right, why does it not appear in the Atlantic colonies such as in the Scottish isles and in Iceland? It can hardly be because it only came into existence after the settlement of these areas from Norway had been more or less completed, as it ought to have featured in the lexicon.

In conclusion, I cannot but assume that place-names of the *\*Miklabólstaðr*-type are probably partly genuine place-name constructions and possibly partly the result of *imitative naming*. Owing to the similarities in locality-application between genuine place-name constructions and analogical *imitative naming*, no distinction can be made between them on the material available and they will henceforth be treated as genuine constructions in any further discussion of place-names in *bólstaðr* (see also Ch. 7.3.).

For most of the names here the final element is certainly ON *bólstaðr*, m. However, a number have not been recorded until after the time when original [l] was dropped. The importance of this consonant is that it is the greatest distinction in sound between *bólstaðr* and *bústaðr*. Therefore, a number of the above names must be noted as being of slightly uncertain

origin phonetically (as are e.g. nos 31, 36, 39, 41, 46 & 47), although, typologically, there can be very little doubt.

It is outside the aim of this book to account for all the phonetic changes which have occurred for each name. Suffice it to say that none of the names have undergone changes which do not occur in the respective dialects in which the individual names function. One point should probably be pointed out, though. Three of the names (nos 27, 33, 36) have the main stress on the generic element. This is unusual as the main stress is normally on the first syllable in Germanic. This peculiar feature is only found in these three *bólstaðr*-names in Møre og Romsdal fylke,<sup>51</sup> and harks back to the original Indo-European variable stress pattern (Christiansen, 1976, pp. 30-1). The remnants of the variable stress pattern of Indo-European in Norwegian show main stress on the generic element in a few dialects. The main stress on the present final syllable in this name, however, cannot be original, as the modern manifestation of the generic has been reduced according to the general changes for this element. This means that generic main stress on these *bólstaðr*-compounds is not original, but a later feature transferred to them by means of analogy. What speaks in favour of this is the fact that the present day final syllable has not retained its original [-l-] sound, which is not prone to be dropped in a stressed environment (cf. Ch. 3.2.).

Some of the above place-names are no longer in existence. For instance, the settlement to which no. 47 referred is now lost as is the name with it. Some renaming has also taken place. As an example, the settlement of *Miklebolstadir* (no. 5) has (most likely) been renamed *Præstegården*, and *Myhlebstadt* (no. 4) is possibly the former name for the settlement of *Bostad*, although this is not certain.

Only a few of these place-names (nos 5, 20, 40, 45) show remnants of plural forms. It is not known why the plural is used with some *bólstaðr*-names, but it is possible that it signals that the area referred to has been considered to consist of more than one settlement.

### MEBOSTAD

Mebostad, S, (32V) NR 385 719, Bjugn sn., Sør-Trøndelag fylke (Søndre Trondhjems Amt).

*Medbostadt* 1590; *Midbosta* 1626; *Medbusta* 1664; *Medbostad* 1723.

51. I have not included Veibenstad among these names, as there is serious doubts as to the origin of this name being ON *bólstaðr*.



The specific is most probably ON *miðr*, adj., 'in the middle' (cf. NG XIV, p. 34, no. 16), but might possibly alternatively be ON *meðal*, adv., 'between (something)'. The generic seems to be *bólstaðr*.

### MELBUSTAD, MIDBOSTAD

1. Melbustad, S, (32V) NM 835 926, Gran sn., Oppland fylke (Kristians Amt).

*Melbostadt* 1520 DN (II, 847); *Meelbostadt* 1578; *Melbostad* 1595 OC (161); *Melbostad* 1604; *Melbustad* 1723; [*mællbusta*] 1902 NG (IV/2, p. 142, no. 170).

2. Midbostad †, S, Stordal sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*af Medalbolstadum* c. 1440 AB (p. 81); *Mebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 95); *Mebust* 1603; *Meiboestadt* 1617; *Medbust* 1666; [*mæbosst*] 1902 NG (XIII, p. 136, no. 82).

The specific is ON *meðal*, adv., 'between (something)'. The generic is *bólstaðr*, although the generic of no. 1 has been interpreted by Kjær (NG IV/2, p. 143, no. 170) as ON *bústaðr*, m. Judging from the spellings, there is nothing which directly speaks against *bólstaðr*, as both original ON [-o:-] / [-u:-] in a weak position in a compound may yield Norw. [-u-] (ON [-o:-] > [-o-] > [-u-]/ON [-u:-] > [-u-] (cf. Ch. 3.2. above). Therefore, on phonetic grounds either is possible. However, since *bústaðr* is usually only found in the simplex, *bólstaðr*, seems altogether more likely here.

The present pronunciation is the result of: 1: ON [-e-] has undergone opening and lowering to [-æ-] (Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 143); 2: ON [-ð-] has been lost, being situated between two vowels (Seip. 1955, pp. 159-60 & 274); 3: and unstressed [-a-] has also been lost at more or less the same time. With no. 1, ON [-l] has been lengthened to compensate for this reduction. For the rest of the compound, see Ch. 3.2.

MIDBOSTAD see s.n. MELBUSTAD

MIKLEBOSTAD see s.n. MEBOST

MYCHLEBOSTADT see s.n. MEBOST

MYKLABOLSTADIR see s.n. MEBOST

MYKLABUST see s.n. MEBOST

**MYKLEBOST** see s.n. MEBOST

**MYKLEBOSTAD** see s.n. MEBOST

**MYKLEBUST** see s.n. MEBOST

**MYKLEBUSTAD** see s.n. MEBOST

**MØGELBOSTAD** see s.n. MEBOST

### **MYRBOSTAD**

Myrbostad, S, (32V) MQ 088 708, Indre Fræna sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Myrabostader* 1412 DN (X, 92); *Myrboustaa* 1610; *Myrbostad* 1633; [*my:rboſta*] 1905 NG (XIII, p. 206, no. 50).

The specific is ON *myrr*, f., 'a moor, a bog' (cf. NG XIII, p. 206, no. 50). The original long quality of the stem vowel is retained even today. The oldest spelling suggests that the genitive pl. form, *myra*, was originally applied here, although the genitive pl. ending, [-a], is no longer visible, having probably been lost, owing to its unstressed position.

The -er of the earliest form may either be a vestige of the nominative plural form, or alternatively a retained nominative singular ending with a svarabhakti-vowel inserted between it and the stem (cf. modern Icelandic -ur and Shetland -er forms).

### **NORBOSTAD**

Norbostad, S, (33W) UN 847 978, Tjøtta sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*af nørðra Bolstade* c. 1440 AB (p. 89); *af nørðra Bolstadhum* c. 1440 AB (p. 90); *Norbostad* 1567; *Nordboesta* 1661; *Norbostad* 1723; [*nolboss-ta*] 1905 NG (XVI, p. 59, no. 80).

The specific is the ON comp. adj. *norðri*, 'more northerly' (cf. NG XVI, p. 59, no. 80).

ON [-rð-] has become [-l-] (Christiansen 1976, pp. 138-9; Sandøy 1985, pp. 184-5; Jahr 1990, pp. 11-3). Prior to this, the original comparative inflectional ending, -ra has been lost, because of its unstressed position.

The earliest forms seem to be in the plural, possibly because the settlement had become split up into several units already by the time of recording, or the plural forms may be the result of a 'false' analogy on names in ON *staðir*, m.

## NORDBOSTAD, NORDBUSTAD

1. Nordbostad, S, (33W) VP 079 415, Nesna sn., Nordland fylke (Nordlands Amt).

*Norbostad* 1567; *Norbosta* 1661; *Nordborstad* 1723; [*nårbusta*] 1910 NG (XVI, p. 116, no. 25).

2. Nordbustad, S, (32V) LM 072 527, Uggdal sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*Norbostadt* 1563; *Norbosta* 1570 DN (VI, 832); *Nordbustad* 1610; *Nordreboste* 1668; [*nårrbåsst*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 162, no. 10).

The specific is ON *norðr*, adv., 'north' (cf. NG XI, pp. 116, no. 25; 162, no. 10).

The modern pronunciation shows that ON [-o-] has been opened and lowered to [-å-] (Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 143). Furthermore, [ð] has been dropped, being the middle consonant in the triconsonantal cluster [-rðb-] (Seip & Saltveit 1971, pp. 176-7<sup>52</sup>). In the case of no. 2, [-r] has been lengthened to [-rr] to retain a long syllable. For the generic element of the compound, see Ch. 3.2.

## NORDBUSTAD see s.n. NORDBOSTAD

## ORMBOSTAD

Ormbostad, S, (32V) MR 634 107, Tustna sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Arnbosta* (?) 1559; *Ormbosta* 1590; *Ormbostad* 1723; [*årmbosta*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 458, no. 48).

The specific might be the genitive sg. of an ON personal name in *Orm-*, or *Qrn-*, which has then undergone ellipsis. K. Rygh (NG XIII, p. 458, no. 48) interprets the specific as a stream name or a firth name, a now unknown *\*Orma*, f. However, owing to the lack of early forms, none of the suggestions can be proved or disproved. What speaks against the former suggestions is that personal names are not usually compounded with *ból-staðr*. K. Rygh's suggestion, on the other hand, is also uncertain, in so far as there are no other place-names containing this element in the vicinity to support this notion. The interpretation of the specific must remain open with this name.

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52. Seip, D. A. & Saltveit, L., *Norwegische Sprachgeschichte*, (Berlin, 1971).

## RUBBESTAD

1. Rubbestad, (32V) KM 876 354, Bremnes sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*Robstad* 1612; *Robbersta* 1668; *Robberstad* 1723; [*rubbesta*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 132, no. 87).

2. Rubbestad, S, (33W) XS 119 756, Trandøy sn., Troms fylke (Tromsø Amt).

*Rubestad* 1567; *Robbestad* 1610; *Robestad* 1614; *Robbestad* 1723; [*rubbesta*] 1911 NG (XVII, p. 71, no. 37).

The specific may be ON *ró*, f., 'a nook, a corner', compounded with *bólstaðr* (cf. NG XI, p. 132, no. 87 and NG XVII, p. 71, no. 37). Another possibility could be the genitive sg. of the ON personal name *Rubbi*, m./*Robbi*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 857; 1931, p. 685), compounded with ON *staðir*, m., 'a farm'. The documentary evidence does not unfortunately present any solution as no written forms are old enough to give any serious indication as to origin. The phonetic transcription also supports both views. The interpretation of this name must remain open.

## SKJELBOSTAD

Skjelbostad, S, (32V) MQ 253 304, Voll sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

af *Skialgobolstadh* c. 1440 AB (p. 75); *Skiellebostadt* c. 1550 DN (X, 804); *Skilboustaa* 1610; *Schiellbostad* 1632; *Shielboestad* 1669; [*ʃælboesta*] 1908 NG (XIII, pp. 223-4, no. 13).

According to K. Rygh (NG XIII, pp. 223-4, no. 13), the specific may be the genitive sg. of a now lost stream name *\*Skjalga*, f. (from ON *skjalgr*, adj., 'warped, bent'), or less likely the genitive sg. of an ON byname *\*Skjalgi*, m. (a weak form of the ON byname *Skjalgr*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 915). This weak form is unattested outside this place-name, however, making this suggestion rather unlikely. Considering that names of water courses are occasionally used to modify *bólstaðr*-names, the former suggestion seems the most likely.

The initial consonant cluster, ON [*skj-*], has been reduced to Norw. [*ʃ-*] (Indrebø 1951, pp. 232-3; Christiansen 1976, p. 123; Jahr 1990, p. 188). Influenced by the preceding palatal consonant cluster ON [*-a-*] becomes [*-æ-*] (cp. ON *stjarna*, f., 'a star', with modern Norwegian *stjerne* [*ʃæn-nə*]); 3: ON [*-lg-*] has become a 'thick' [*-l-*] to compensate for the loss of [*g*] in the combination [*-lg-*]. For the generic element of the compound, see Ch. 3.2.

### SULEBUST

Sulebust, S, (32V) LQ 519 221, Hareid sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*Sulebostad* 1617; *Sullebust* 1666; *Sulebust* 1723; [*'sulebosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 60, no. 80).

The specific is the island name *Sula* (< ON \**Súla*, f.), on which this settlement is situated (cf. NG XIII, p. 60, no. 80).

The shortening of the original long vowel, [-u:-] to [-u-], does not usually occur under stress, but may be because the long compound (once four syllables, now three) has influenced the quantity of the stem vowel. A possible parallel case may be found in *Grytebost*, Borgund sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke, above. For the generic element, see Ch. 3.2.

### TREBOSTAD

Trebostad, S, (32W) PS 140 263, Ås sn., Nord-Trøndelag fylke (Nordre Trondhjems Amt).

*Trelboste* 1559; *Trebostad* 1563 DN (XII, 831); *Threbostadt* 1590; *Threlbosta* 1626; *Threbostad* 1643; *Trebostad* 1669; *Træbostad* 1723; [*'trebosta*] 1903 NG (XV, p. 252, no. 171).

The specific appears to be ON *þræll*, m., 'a thrall, serf' (cf. NG XV, 252, no. 171). However, the present stem vowel does not readily suggest this. A cautious explanation could be that the present form and pronunciation have been influenced by Norw. *tre*, sb., 'a tree, wood' (< ON *tré*, n.). The 1669 and 1723 forms certainly suggest so. This would at explain the present vowel quality.

Although K. Rygh suggests *bústaðr* as a possibility, there is very little in the way of documentary forms and present-day pronunciation to suggest that the generic should not be *bólstaðr*. For the generic element, see Ch. 3.2.

### ULLEBUST

Ullebust, S, (32V) LP 352 125, Førde sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Vllebustad* 1603; *Vlfffbustad* 1608; *Wllebust* 1667; *Ullebust* 1723; [*'állbåsst*] 1919 NG (XII, pp. 328-9, no. 54).

The specific might be the genitive sg. of the name of the Norse god *Ullr*, m., although this is thought improbable by K. Rygh (cf. NG XII, pp. 328-9, no. 54), as the names of deities are not usually used to compound *bólstaðr*-names. Nevertheless, there are examples in Sweden, where names from OSw *bolstaper* seem to be compounded with names of gods

(incl. *Ullr*). Furthermore, since there are other specifics referring to cultic utilisation and practice (e.g. ON *heilagr*, adj., and ON *vé*, n.) which are compounded with *bólstaðr* in Norway, this possibility cannot be entirely ruled out. A more likely possibility, however, is the genitive pl. of ON *ulfr*, m., 'a wolf'. The ON consonant cluster [-lf-] can undergo assimilation to [-ll-] in Sogn og Fjordane. One example is *Ullebøen*, Kyrkjebø sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke, whose written forms, as well as pronunciation, are close to those of *Ullbust*, here (Ulffuebø 1611; Vllebøe 1667; Ullebøe 1723; [ullebø:dn] (NG XII, p. 176, no. 34)). Names containing wild animals are sometimes, albeit rarely, found compounded with *bólstaðr*.

The documentary evidence suggests that the generic is *bústaðr*, m., but the pronunciation points to *bólstaðr*, although the present day sound of the stem vowel may be due to a regressive assimilation to the following vowel (Seip, 1955, p. 251). If this is the case, the change must have been late, especially when taking into consideration the fact that all the written forms show remnants of the old genitive pl. inflectional element until relatively recently. For the generic element, see Ch. 3.2.

### UTBOSTAD

Utbostad, S, (32V) MK 099 778, Grindheim sn., Vest Agder fylke (Lister og Mandal Amt).

*Vdborstad* 1594; *Vdbostad* 1668; *Udboestad* 1723; [ʔubosta] 1903 NG (IX, p. 125, no. 29).

The specific seems to be ON *úti*, adv., 'out, outside' (cf. NG IX, p. 125, no. 29).

The original long stem vowel [u:] of the specific has been shortened to [u-], probably owing to the situation of ON *úti*, adv., in a compound. Furthermore, unstressed ON [-i-] and later [-d-] (< ON [t]) have been dropped. For the generic element, see Ch. 3.2.

### VEBBESTAD

Vebbestad, S, (33W) WS 455 277, Kvæfjord sn., Troms fylke (Tromsø Amt).

*af Vebolstad* c. 1440 AB (p. 100); *a Vebolssodum* c. 1450 DN (VI, 346); *a Væbolstathom* c. 1450 DN (VI, 227); *i Vebolstadum* c. 1450 DN (VI, 320); *a Vebulstadum* c. 1450 DN (VI, 348); *Wobestaa* 1567; *Webestad* 1610; *Vebbestad* 1614; *Webenstad* 1661; *Wæbbestad* 1723; [væbbesta] 1911 NG (XVII, p. 7, no. 39).

The specific is probably ON *vé*, n., 'a holy place where sacrifice takes place' (cf. NG XVII, p. 7, no. 39).

It is not quite clear, however, why ON [-e:] has been shortened to [-e] and subsequently opened and lowered to [-æ], since a long stem vowel in an open syllable would not normally be reduced as here (Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 89), but the trisyllabic structure of the name may well account for this. For the generic element, see Ch. 3.2.

The /-n-/ in the 1661 entry is presumably a misspelling. Under all circumstances, it cannot be linked to a sound change of original [-l-] > [-n-] (cf. Stemshaug 1989, p. 63), as there is a two-century gap between the last documented occurrence of the original [-l-] to the appearance of the /-n-/.

### VEIBUST

Veibust, S, (32V) LQ 635 248, Borgund sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt).

*af Veibolstadum* c. 1440 AB (p. 79); *Vigbostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 100); *Vei-debostadh* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 3); *Weigbust* 1603; *Veibostad* 1616; *Veebostad* 1617; *Weybust* 1666; *Weibust med Stranden* 1723; [*veibosst*] 1911 NG (XIII, p. 180, no. 59).

K. Rygh (NG XIII, p. 180, no. 59) interprets the specific as a now lost island-name \**Veig*, f., which he assumes was the name applied to the isolated eastern part of *Sula*. He supports this by listing another settlement name on a nearby island, called *Vegsund* (NG XIII, p. 175, 15). K. Rygh dismisses the earliest form as miswritten. Nevertheless, if the oldest written form is correct, then ON *vé*, n., 'a sacred place where sacrifices take place', should be considered as a possibility. The modern pronunciation could be explained by a diphthongisation of ON [-e:] to [-ei]. However, this change is really confined to the Setesdal area and should not take place here (Sandøy 1985, p. 172). This uncertainty, and the seeming incompatibility of ON *vé*, n., with later written forms, makes this suggestion unlikely. The present-day diphthong most likely reflects an origin from ON \**Veig*, f. The vocalisation of the spirant [-g] (Seip 1955, p. 266) has probably helped to strengthen the expression. For the development of the generic element, see Ch. 3.2.

### VESPESTAD, VESTBØSTAD

1. Vespestad, S, (32V) KM 860 130, Bømle sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*Vestbostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 527); *Vesbostadt* 1563; *Westbostaid* 1567; *Vespesta* 1668; *Wespestad* 1723; [*væsspesta*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 129, no. 56).

2. Vestbøstad, S, (32V) KM 935 473, Fitjar sn., Hordaland fylke (Søndre Bergenhus Amt).

*Vestbostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 530); *Vesbostadt* 1563; *Vestbostad* 1610; *Vespesta* 1668; *Wespestad* 1723; [*væsspesta*] 1910 NG (XI, p. 156, no. 61).

The specific is ON *vestr*, adv., 'west' (cf. NG XI, pp. 129, no. 56; 156, no. 61). Because of the lateness of the documentary evidence, it cannot be ascertained that the generic is *bólstaðr*, but neither the documentary evidence nor the phonetic rendering points in any other direction.

ON [-e-] > Mod. Norw. [-æ-] (Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 143). Later, ON [-t-] was lost in the triconsonantal combination [-stb-] (Seip 1955, p. 166), here with subsequent lengthening of [-s-] to [-ss-] to compensate for the loss. Original [b-] has become unvoiced, as a result of the influence of the unvoiced consonant sound in the consonant cluster. For the rest of the generic element, see Ch. 3.2.

### VESTBØSTAD see s.n. VESPESTAD

### ØVERBOSTAD

Øverbostad †, S, Stordal sn., Møre og Romsdals fylke (Romsdals Amt). *af Øfra Bolstadum* c. 1440 AB (p. 81); *Orebostad* c. 1521 NRJ (II, 95); *Øffuerbostad* c. 1530 OEJ (p. 4); *øffre Øffrebostadt* 1551 DN (XII, 779); *øffre Bolsta* 1552 DN (XII, 789); *Offuerbostad*, *Offuerbust* 1603; *Overbust* 1723; [*ø:rbosst*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 136, no. 82).

The specific is the ON comparative adj. *øfri*, 'upper' (cf. NG XIII, p. 136, no. 82).

Medial [-və-] has been lost, with subsequent lengthening of the stem vowel.

### ØYDEBOST

Øydebost, S, (32V) LP 315 251, Naustdal sn., Sogn og Fjordane fylke (Nordre Bergenhus Amt).

*Oddebustad* 1603; *Ødebustad* 1608; *Øøebust* 1667; *Ødebust* 1743; [*øi-båsst*] 1919 NG (XII, p. 343, no. 149).

The specific is ON *eyði*, n., 'the condition of a place as uninhabited or uncultivated' (cf. NG XII, p. 343, no. 149). The documentary evidence seemingly points to the generic originating from ON *bústaðr*. However, it was not unusual to represent [o] or [â] as /u/ in Western Norway in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The pronunciation listed in NG, [-â-], certainly does not indicate an origin other than *bólstaðr*.

The 1603 form, *Oddebustad*, is presumably erroneous, as none of the ensuing source-forms bears any resemblance with this form.



## ÅRBOSTAD

Årbostad, S, (33W) WS 945 476, Ibestad sn., Troms fylke (Tromsøs Amt). *Arbustad* 1610; *Aarboestad* 1614; *Aabostad* 1661; *Aarbostad* 1723; [*orr-bosta*] 1911 NG (XVII, p. 50, no. 111).

The specific is *ár*, the gen. sg. of ON *á*, f., 'a stream'. The NG pronunciation may be explained as a regressive assimilation of [ǣ] to the vowel sound of the ensuing syllable [o-] (Seip 1955, p. 251). The original long stem vowel has been shortened, resulting in a lengthening of the consonant [-r] to the present [-rr], in order to maintain the length of the stem syllable (Skard, vol. 1, 1967, p. 89). Alternative suggestions are: the gen. pl. of ON *orri*, m., 'a black grouse', or K. Rygh's suggestion, the genitive sg. of a byname \**Orri*, m., derived from that appellative (cf. NG XVII, p. 50, no. 111). However, for these two suggestions to work, a regressive assimilation similar to the above mentioned would have had to take place, as ON [o] is usually opened and lowered to [ǣ] (as in *Åstein*, NG XVII, p. 41, no. 41, [*årstein*]). K. Rygh also suggests a form of ON *alri*, n., 'alders' (ultimately related to ON *ǣlr*, m., 'an alder tree'), but this suggestion is not easily compatible with documentary or phonetic evidence (ON [lr] is usually assimilated to [ll]).

The generic is probably *bólstaðr*, but might alternatively be *bústaðr*, as the earliest written form suggests. However, the rest of the forms, together with the NG transcription, support *bólstaðr*.

### 3.4. Dating the Norwegian place-name material in *-bólstaðr*

The Norwegian *bólstaðr*-place-names can with certainty be dated to the period of Viking-Age Norse expansion into the North Atlantic area, owing to the occurrence of this place-name element there. The Viking-Age expansion into this area is traditionally believed to have started c. 800 AD, originally with sporadic raids.<sup>53</sup> About half a century later, these had developed into the establishment of settlements in the area, as far as can be dated from related archaeological finds in Scotland.<sup>54</sup> The second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century is then the earliest probable date of coinage for *bólstaðr*-names in Scotland and this means that it must also have been an active

53. Cf. Crawford, Barbara, *Scandinavian Scotland*, (Leicester, 1987), pp. 39-47.

54. Graham-Campbell, James, 'The Irish Sea Vikings: raiders and settlers', in Scott, T. & Starkey, P. (eds), *The Middle Ages in the North-West*, (Liverpool, 1995), pp. 59-83.

place-name element in Norway at this date. However, such a dating does not say anything about how much earlier or how much later a place-name element was active in the mother country. The general appearance of *bólstaðr* place-names in sources from as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century suggest with a reasonable degree of certainty that the majority of names had been coined by this time. But were *bólstaðr* place-names of this type actively being coined as late as this?

As far as I have been able to interpret the material, I feel that the latest date of active productivity must be pushed further back in time. For instance, when appearing in the genitive in the place-names all original weak nouns show genitive endings or remnants of these in a vowel, as in e.g. *Bersa*, gen. sg. of the personal name *Bersi*, m. That the weak nouns still show original genitive endings and not an -s, which became increasingly usual after 1150, enables us to push the date of coinage for the majority of names as far back as to before that.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, there are no words in the material relating to Christianity (introduced c. 1000), whereas there are one certain and 13 probable references to pagan cultic activity. Therefore, there is good reason to assume that *bólstaðr* had ceased to be actively productive by around 1000, and certainly by 1150.

The Norwegian place-names in ON *bólstaðr*, m., seem to have been coined roughly within a period from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century to into the 11<sup>th</sup>. Taking the presence of pagan cultic references in the place-name material into consideration, I would suggest that the majority of names were coined in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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55. Seip, Didrik Arup, *Norsk Språkhistorie*, (Oslo, 1955), p. 189.

## 4. Place-names in *-bólstaðr* in Scotland

### 4.1. The element *-bólstaðr* in Scotland

#### Geography

The following works have been consulted for this sub-chapter are: E.A. Fitzpatrick, 'The Soils of Scotland', in Burnett, J. H., *The Vegetation of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1964); Robert Price, *Highland Landforms*, (Aberdeen, 1991); Oliver Rackham, *The illustrated history of the countryside*, (London, 1994).

The landscape has been subject to severe erosion for tens of millions of years, if not hundreds of millions of years. The erosion of the topography is an ongoing process. Erosion throughout Scotland produces something like 10-50 tonnes of rock debris per square kilometre per year. This may sound like a lot but in fact it only corresponds to a lowering of the land surface with 1-5 cm per 1,000 years. Glacial erosion is the main contributor to the appearance of the present Scottish landscape. There have been several periods of glacial erosion in Scotland, the latest began about 27,000 years ago and terminated some 10,000 years later.

Starting from the north, Shetland has for its relatively small size a rather complex geology. Most of the underground consists of schist and granite, although much of Walls, all of Sandness, Papa Stour, Bressay and adjacent Mainland, the south south-eastern end of the Mainland, with the islands of Foula and Fair Isle consist of sandstone. Furthermore, narrow bands of Limestone are found in Weisdale and Tingwall.<sup>56</sup> This multitude of geological formations is largely the cause of the shape of Shetland. The schist has a strong structural north-south alignment, which explains the oblong shape of the islands in general. The rock is strongly folded and, with the relatively high level of erosion Shetland has suffered, the landscape consists of a series of ridges (hard layers) and valleys (soft layers) throughout the island group. The landscape is of a well-rounded character and the alti-

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56. Crawford, Barbara E., *Scandinavian Scotland*, (Leicester, 1987), pp. 28-9.

tudes are not extreme. The majority of the landscape rises no higher than 180-270 m above sea level.

The above-mentioned areas of sandstone represent the timid beginnings of a long belt of Old Red Sandstone which stretches from Shetland down to cover all of Orkney and Caithness, the coast of the Dornoch Firth, Cromarty, Beauly, and Moray. This geology has given Orkney, Caithness, and the north-eastern coast of Scotland their rolling topography of very wide, fertile valleys, gentle slopes and broad low divides, which rarely exceed an altitude of 180 m in Orkney and Caithness. The maximum altitude of this sandstone belt is no higher than 450 m. The Orkney islands consist of about 90 islands and skerries which all give the impression of a very old landscape with remnant hills and broad valleys. Caithness and the Moray Firth constitute the most extensive area of low altitude (below 120 m) in the Highlands.

As one moves westward, the gentle landscape of Caithness and the Moray Firth slowly changes into the rugged and mountainous North-Central Highlands, which extend right down to the Great Glen Fault line. Almost the entire North-Central Highlands are formed from schist. Severe glaciation has created a landscape that consists of groups of mountains of an altitude of between 600 m and 1150 m rising above an extensive undulating surface of 250-360 m above sea level. The North-Central Highlands have very few areas of low altitude or even of low-angle slopes, features that have limited the possibilities for agricultural exploitation in the area. To the west of the North-Central Highlands, along a major thrust line running from Loch Eriboll to the Sound of Sleat, known as the Moine Thrust, there is yet another distinctive geology incorporating some of the oldest rock in Scotland: Lewisian gneiss, which is about 1,600-2,600 million years old. This structure probably underlies all the north-west Highlands, but extensive outcrops only occur in a few places.

The geology of the north-west Highlands is continued in the Outer Hebrides. Here, however, the layer of sandstone must have been thinner than on the mainland, as there is only one small outcrop of sandstone around Stornoway. The rest of the Outer Hebrides consist exclusively of Lewisian gneiss. The Outer Hebrides stretch for some 250 km along the West Highland coast and are exposed to the full force of the Atlantic Ocean. Lewis, the northernmost area, is also the largest. In its north and central parts, Lewis consists mainly of a rolling upland with the highest ground not exceeding 250 m. South Lewis and Harris, on the other hand, are characterised by rugged mountains, deep troughs and steep valley sides, as are also North Uist, Benbecula, and South Uist. Almost the entire

Outer Hebrides are characterised by having rapid alternations of water and land. Lakes and sea lochs abound and there are a number of closely spaced islands, usually with low-water causeways connecting them. One important landform is found throughout the Outer Hebrides that has not been discussed yet: the machairs. Machairs are strips of wind-blown shell-sand, which line the westcoast. The machairs are easily tilled and provide good farming land under the right conditions. However, these strips of blown sand do not stretch more than 800-1600 m inland.

The Inner Hebrides constitute an area of great geological diversity. The Inner Hebrides consist of about 500 islands, of which only the largest will be discussed here. Canna, Rhum, Eigg, Muck, and Mull consist largely of lavas and granites. These islands have all been exposed to severe erosion, resulting in large variations in altitude with peaks in some of the islands reaching altitudes as high as 700-950 m. Skye consists mostly of lava and granite, with some outcrops of sandstone and limestone. Skye has a most irregular shape with numerous long peninsulas separated by deep sounds and sea lochs.

Tiree and Coll are underlain with gneiss and this makes them similar in character to the Outer Hebrides, especially Lewis. Neither island exceeds 60 m in altitude, and each has a moderate topography. On the coastline there are extensive areas of machair. Sandstone is a dominant feature of Colonsay and Oronsay, which means that the landscape consists of open, shallow valleys and ridges, rarely exceeding 90 m in altitude. Both islands also feature large areas of machair. Islay is mostly formed from schist and quartzite, apart from the western part, which consists of sandstone and a tiny outcrop of gneiss, forming the Rhinns of Islay. The terrain is relatively gentle with most of the land below 200 m. Machairs also feature strongly in Islay, constituting almost a quarter of the island's coastline – almost exclusively confined to the westcoast.

The all-important factor determining the suitability of land for human cultivation is the question of drainage. Problems arise if the slope of a given piece of land is not sufficiently steep to drain water from the area, or if the underlying rocks are not porous enough to allow water to pass through them. Furthermore, because of the heavy glaciation of the Highlands most areas lack a layer of unconsolidated sediment on top of the hard rock that would make it possible for the surplus water accumulation to tunnel its way out. The land becomes waterlogged and peat will develop. In the west of Scotland, where the amount of rainfall is high and the drainage poor, the peat layer is several metres thick (here also called blanket-peat), whereas in the drier eastern parts of Scotland the peat layer is

only a few centimetres deep. The extremely wet conditions of the soil make cultivation almost impossible and the classification cannot be anything but poor. However, the extensive areas of peat are not wholly without economic potential. The better, grass-covered, moors are suitable for grazing and peat can be cut and dried and used as a source of fuel. Although moorland is known to expand, the extent of the moors in the tenth century AD cannot have been vastly different from what it is today. Nevertheless, the extent of peat-covered moors in the Highlands and Islands is vast. Peat and other organic soils and rocks are by far the most commonly occurring soil group.

The only places in Scotland to display a substantially different kind of vegetation and soil quality coincide very precisely with areas that feature geology consisting of porous sandstone. This means that areas like Caithness and Orkney have the best land for cultivation in the Highlands and Islands, not only owing to better drainage, but also because of a deeper layer of workable soil. Furthermore, the easy cultivation of Caithness and Orkney is accentuated by the gently sloping landscape of these areas, which is of a more than sufficiently low gradient to allow cultivation. The land classification of Caithness and Orkney ranges from good to medium – classifications only matched in small outcrops in Shetland, the Hebrides and Western Scotland.

With really only Caithness and Orkney displaying a geology suitable for cultivation, does this mean that these areas are the only ones extensively settled, both by Scandinavians about 1000 years ago and today for that matter? Although mountainous areas take up about 80 per cent of the land in the Highlands and Islands and give this region its distinctive character, the 20 per cent land with low-angle slopes in the region provides a number of areas which are also well suited for settlement. Most of this land is made up of valley floors and coastal lowlands featuring low-angle slopes favourable for cultivation and settlement. Valley floors will often have unconsolidated sediment of a sufficient depth to make cultivation possible. The valley floors are usually sheltered from the harshest of the weather extremes seen in Scotland and there will often also be good access to fresh water. The area suitable for cultivation in a valley is naturally confined to the gentle slopes on the floor of the valley. However, the steeper valley sides provide good pasture for cattle and sheep, which mean that the economy of the valley farming may be supplemented in this way. The best valley areas are often confined to coastal areas, so fishing may also help to support the economy, if the amount of land available is limited.

There are also extensive areas of coastal lowlands suitable for cultivation throughout the Hebrides. The areas may either be raised beaches consisting of sand or unconsolidated sediment such as clay or gravel or they may be the sand-blown features known as machairs. The machairs are mostly composed of siliceous and calcareous sand of very variable mixtures. The siliceous material is thought to be from offshore glacial deposits whereas the calcareous material is derived from crushed shells. If the calcareous amounts are high, it allows the machair soils to support a rich and varied flora, and to be cultivated. The machairs, consisting mostly of sand are easily cultivated but can be subject to both drought and swamping. Nevertheless, some of the very best soils in the Hebrides are found on machair land.

### Dissemination

Place-names in *bólstaðr* have a very widespread distribution in Scotland, although, numerically speaking, there are great differences from region to region. In general, localities bearing a name in *bólstaðr* are mostly confined to the Northern and Western Isles and the northernmost part of the Mainland. Earlier distribution maps also show a scatter of names on the west coast of the Mainland (as well as a slightly higher density of distribution in the Western Isles), usually with the modern reflex of *-bol(l)* and *-pol(l)*. My research, however, has shown (cf. Chs 7, 9 & Appendix 2) that many of this group of names are of other origins than *bólstaðr*, namely ON *ból*, n., 'a farm', or ON *pollr*, m., 'a pool, a small rounded bay', or Gaelic *poll*, m., 'a pit, a pond', and so forth. In spite of the fact that the distribution between *bólstaðr* localities and localities belonging to the aforementioned group is to a large extent complementary, source forms unequivocally show that they cannot be regarded as being of one and the same origin. Therefore, names in *-bol(l)/-pol(l)* have not been included in this study proper, unless individual source forms show or suggest an origin in *bólstaðr*, as is the case with e.g. the now lost *Stanepoll* in Islay (*Staynbolshay* 1562).

*Bólstaðr* as a place-name element has been far more productive in Scotland than in its Norwegian homeland. This study comprises 240 Scottish place-names that originate, or possibly originate, from this place-name element (see fig. 3). For the sake of convenience, I have also chosen to include the one possible example found in the Isle of Man in the Scottish material. The greatest concentration of names clearly coincides with the most fertile areas under Scandinavian control during the Viking Age, namely Orkney and Caithness. With seventy-five examples, Orkney is the

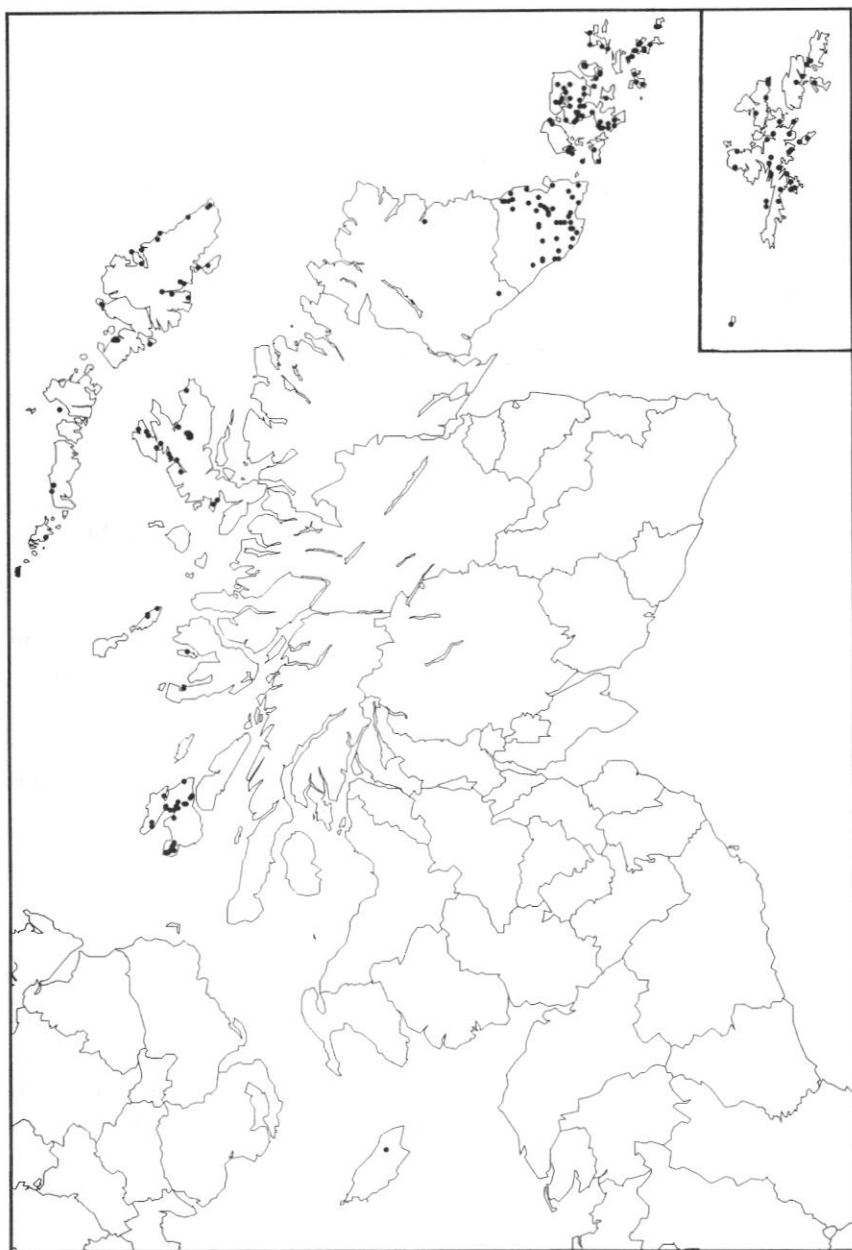


Fig. 3. The distribution of place-names in Old Norse *bólstaðr* in Scotland and Isle of Man.



area with by far the greatest concentration of localities with names in *bólstaðr*, followed by forty-four in Caithness but only two in Sutherland. These two areas constitute almost half of the entire Scottish *bólstaðr*-material! The northernmost part of Scotland, Shetland is also well represented with no less than thirty-seven examples.

The Western Isles are much more sparsely provided with place-names in *bólstaðr*. The reasons for this are not entirely clear but one factor may well be the general lack of suitable farming land. Twenty-seven *bólstaðr* localities are found in the Long Isle, sixteen of which are situated in Lewis, five in Harris and six in the Uists and Barra. Another eighteen examples are to be found in Skye, followed by two in Coll and two in Mull. The greatest concentration in the Hebrides is, however known to have existed in Islay. No less than thirty-two examples are known from this area.

The remaining locality to be mentioned is the single Isle of Man example, representing the southernmost extension of the *bólstaðr* distribution in the British Isles. Why there is only one doubtful example in Man can only be surmised but for reasons unknown this place-name element does not seem to have had much relevance here.

As in the case of the Norwegian dissemination, the Scottish distribution of localities with place-names in *bólstaðr* is far from even throughout the area of Scandinavian influence. The Northern Isles and Caithness are the areas with by far the most examples, with Islay as another centre of distribution. Inbetween these poles, a fair number of *bólstaðr* localities are scattered about in the northern Hebrides.

### Previous research

As a place-name element *bólstaðr* is a regular feature in Scottish-Scandinavian place-name research. The context in which the element features is usually a local survey in which place-names within a limited area are scrutinised. The linguistic situation varies greatly from region to region in Scotland and this is probably partly the reason for the focus on local surveys. Since it is a frequent element in research into the Scandinavian colonisation of Scotland, I have chosen only to comment on the articles that I feel have been the most influential ones.

Scottish-Scandinavian place-name research owes much to one person, Dr. **Hugh Marwick** who pioneered the field. Early on, Marwick developed an interest in the place-names in his native Orkney and first published his findings in the *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society* ('The place-names of North Ronaldsay', (1923); 'Antiquarian notes on Papa

Westray', (1924); 'Antiquarian notes on Stronsay, (1927)).<sup>57</sup> These publications were little more than listings of place-names with interpretations. However, there is one area in which Marwick stands out from his contemporaries – he uses documentary evidence to support his interpretations. He is one of the first in this field to do so and he is as such a forerunner for modern place-name research in Scotland.

Listing place-names soon became a too limited approach for him and in 1931 Marwick published the article 'Orkney farm-name studies', again in the *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*. Here he uses a number of farm-name types (*quoy*, *setter*, *skaill*, *stath*, *land*, *garth*, *bister*, *baer*, *vin* and *heim*) together with rental evidence to establish a chronology of farm settlement. By correlating information from rentals with the physical situation, Marwick considers names in *quoy* (< ON *kví*) to be of the latest phase of settlement; *setter* (< ON *setr/sætr*) to be 'relatively late'; *stath* (< ON *staðir*), and *skaill* (< ON *skáli*) to belong to an intermediate phase. The elements *land* (< ON *land*), *garth* (< ON *garðr*), and *bister* (< ON *bólstaðr*) belonged to an early phase of settlement but not the earliest, which was occupied by names in *baer* (< ON *bær*).

If we return to names in *-bister*, Marwick finds that they could not really be of any other origin than ON *bólstaðr* (although in simplex form, an alternative suggestion could be ON *bústaðr*). He is also of the impression that they were relatively early (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries) because of their high rental value. However, owing to large variations in valuation, the *bister* element is found to have been productive over a long period. The physical distribution of *bister*-farms in certain areas where farms with names in *garth* and *land* were less frequent than usual, and vice versa, means that Marwick finds that the three generics were more or less contemporary. By assigning farms with names from ON *bólstaðr* to an early phase of settlement, a problem arises with the many farms of the Kirbister (*kirkju-bólstaðr*) type. In Marwick's view, these names did not originate from the period following the conversion of Orcadians to Christianity (i.e. 1000 AD and onwards). The names were rather a manifestation that the incoming

57. To these articles should be added the posthumously published monograph *The place-names of Birsay*, (Aberdeen, 1970), and possibly also an unpublished collection of Deerness place-names (privately owned, Orkney). Having only heard about the latter, I cannot comment on its contents. However, the former is a well-executed compilation of place-names with no developments in relation to Marwick's main work. Hence, I would say that *The place-names of Birsay* can be grouped with his earliest works.

Norse did not kill off Christian missionaries and that it was their structures that were referred to by the specific. Marwick further underlines this supposition with the fact that only one Kirbister (Shapinsay) later became the site of the parish church.

The above theories were later modified in Marwick's monumental work *Orkney farm names* from 1952. Here Marwick uses the generics ON *bú*, ON *skáli*, ON *staðir*, ON *land*, ON *garðr*, ON *bólstaðr*, ON *kví*, ON *setr*, to set up a relative chronology for settlement in Orkney. Marwick sees three main sequences: 'primary', 'secondary', and 'peripheral' settlement. By 'primary' is meant the earliest layer of settlement; by 'secondary' the layer which develops as a result of the expansion from 'primary' settlements; 'peripheral' covers all outlying and marginal settlements resulting from a later expansion from a 'primary' or 'secondary' settlement. ON *bólstaðr* falls into the category of 'secondary' settlement, together with ON *land* and ON *garðr*. In order to obtain the most precise and original sequence of chronology, Marwick uses only the rental names, of which there are some 50 examples. Marwick analyses ON *bólstaðr* as 'a farm settlement', yielding modern reflexes such as *-bister*, *-buster*, *-bust*. A couple of the examples may originate from ON *bústaðr* (e.g. Busta in North Ronaldsay).

Of the rental names, most *bólstaðr* settlements were highly or relatively highly taxed. Marwick found farms in *bólstaðr* evenly distributed over Orkney. However, some areas (e.g. Holm and Orphir) have a larger concentration of farm names from ON *bólstaðr* than usual (upward of 40%). Marwick found that names in *-bister* had much the same general location as names in *-land* and *-garth*. They occupy relatively central positions in the parish; always on good, fertile ground. This combined with the fact that so many of the settlements were fairly large, shows that they were relatively early settlements. To Marwick, individual examples of *-bister*, *-land*, and *-garth* may represent original Norse settlements, but on the whole, these three types must be regarded, to some extent at least, as secondary ones.

As such, Marwick does not say much that is new in his *Orkney farm names* compared with his 1931 article. There can be little doubt that this work has had an immense influence on the work of later scholars, such as W. F. H. Nicolaisen (see below), to name but one. Marwick presents a well-structured argument for a farm name chronology in Orkney. However, his blind belief in the antiquity of the Orcadian tax system is the weak link in his thesis. Later researchers have disputed that the tax system can have been established as early as Harald Finehair's expeditions, as

Marwick believes.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, Marwick's attention to documentary evidence and relative caution in interpretation has made his work a long-lasting source of reference.

Probably the most influential paper on place-names of Scandinavian origin in Scotland was published in 1969. Professor **W. F. H. Nicolaisen's** 'Norse settlement in the Northern and Western Isles. Some place-name evidence', appeared in the *Scottish Historical Review* (1969).

Following on from Marwick's ideas of using selected place-name generics to trace the Scandinavian impact on Scotland, Nicolaisen uses four place-name generics: ON *staðir*, ON *setr*, ON *bólstaðr*, and ON *dalr*, to point out the chronological development of Scandinavian settlement. The main thesis is that spatial distribution equals chronological sequence. He is of the opinion that since ON *staðir* is the least widely scattered place-name generic of the three, it represents the original stage of Scandinavian control (c. 800-850). ON *setr* being more widely distributed than ON *staðir* then reflects the stage of consolidation and expansion (850-900). The generic with the most widely spread distribution is ON *bólstaðr* and hence it represents the widest extent of Scandinavian expansion and settlement in the northern and western islands and adjacent mainland of Scotland (before c. 900). Nicolaisen argues that ON *bólstaðr* constitutes the area of Scandinavian settlement. Place-names in ON *dalr* show not settlement, but rather the 'sphere of influence' of the Scandinavians in Scotland. This is because *dalr* is not a habitative generic but a topographic one, usually associated with pastoral farming.

To Nicolaisen, ON *bólstaðr* means plain and simply 'farm' and he considers that too much attention should not be paid to the fact that split-up farms in Norway consisted of several *ból*. In Scotland, Nicolaisen argues, ON *bólstaðr* stands for farms created independently from other farms, both economically speaking, as well as, linguistically speaking, on the place-name level. Relying on Marwick's findings, Nicolaisen found that the settlements in ON *bólstaðr* occupy central positions in the parishes and are usually situated on good fertile land, showing that they were established relatively early. This interpretation of ON *bólstaðr* appears mostly to have derived from Brøgger's theories (see Ch. 3.1.).

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58. Cf. e.g. Thomson below, and Sandnes, Berit, *Stedsnavn af norrønt opphav på Orknøyene*, in *NoB* 86, (Uppsala, 1998), pp. 45-6.

Nicolaisen identifies the following modern endings of place-names as being reflexes of ON *bólstaðr*: *-bister*, in Shetland; *-bister*, *-bust*, *-bist*, *-buster* in Orkney; *-bster*, *-pster*, *-mster* in Caithness; *-bost* in Skye and the Outer Hebrides; *-bus* in Islay (from the earlier forms: *-bols*, *-bolls*, *-bollis*). Furthermore, he also identified *-bol(l)*, *-bo*, *-poll*, *-pool* as being reflexes of ON *bólstaðr* after the names had been subjected to heavy initial stress from Gaelic usage.

Nicolaisen repeats his findings in a number of articles: e.g. in the chapter on Scandinavian names in his book *Scottish Place-names*, (1977) and in 'The Viking settlement of Scotland. Evidence of Place-Names', *The Vikings*, Farrell, R. T. (ed.) (1982), etc. Nicolaisen's theories have pretty much become the standard view on Scandinavian settlement names in Scotland and have been much used by various authors on related subjects.

Nicolaisen presents a good and well-structured thesis on the spatial and chronological distribution of Scandinavian place-names, including ON *bólstaðr*. The thesis is very innovative for its time. In recent years, Nicolaisen's theories have been criticised by other scholars for too blindly relying on the notion that spatial distribution equals chronological sequence, and his article 'Place-Name Maps – How Reliable are They?', may be seen as an attempt to remedy some of the criticism.<sup>59</sup>

In 1984, **Gillian Fellows-Jensen** ventured from her own turf, the Danelaw, onto the Scottish scene in her 'Viking Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles – the Place-Name evidence as seen from Denmark and the Danelaw'.<sup>60</sup>

In this article Fellows-Jensen aims to investigate whether Nicolaisen's thesis about *-staðir*, *-setr* and *-bólstaðr* as being reflections of three stages of progression of the Scandinavian settlement is satisfactory, especially seen in the light of information from the Danelaw.

Fellows-Jensen is very careful to point out that the modern reflexes of ON *bólstaðr* are: *Bousta* as simplex and *-bister* in compounds in Shetland. In Orkney it occurs as *Busta* or *Bousta* as a simplex name and as *-bister*, *-buster*, *-bist*, *-bust* in compounds. In Lewis the simplex reflex is *Bosta*,

59. Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 'Place-Name Maps – How Reliable are They?', in Peterson, Lena (ed.), *Studia Onomastica: Festschrift till Thorsten Andersson*, (Stockholm, 1989), pp. 261-8.

60. Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, 'Viking Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles – the Place-Name Evidence as seen from Denmark and the Danelaw', in Fenton, A. & Pálsson, H. (eds) *Northern and Western Isles in the Viking World*, (1984), pp. 148-68.

whereas *-bost* is the compound variant. Caithness has *-bster* as the compounded form. Skye has *-bost*, *-bus* (?) and *-busta*, while Islay has *-bus*, *-pus* from an earlier *-bols*. To Fellows-Jensen the Skye and Islay forms all reflect the influence of Gaelic pronunciation on Scandinavian names. Gaelic tended to 'hone' polysyllabic Scandinavian names down to no more than three syllables.

Fellows-Jensen argues that the modern reflexes represent ON *bólstaðr* rather than ON *bústaðr*, as is reflected in some early forms (of *Scrabster* (< *Skárabólstaðr*) and *Scarrabus* (< *Skarabolsy*)), although there is no phonological distinction to discern in the present reflexes. Fellows-Jensen agrees with Nicolaisen that placing colonial farm-names in the chronology of the homeland is of no relevance, as the conditions are not comparable. To her, the generic ON *bólstaðr* was not used of a farm in general in Scandinavia but with some kind of special significance concerned with the farm's lands or its tax potential. The poor survival in Sweden of names in ON *bólstaðr* means that the units were generally smallish. Whether there was any particular significance connected to the generic in the colonial environment, however, is difficult to say. Fellows-Jensen takes the colonial significance to mean 'just a farm, possibly a division of a larger unit'.<sup>61</sup>

ON *bústaðr*, on the other hand means literally 'a dwelling-place' and does not seem to be found in old place-names in the Scandinavian countries. This means that Fellows-Jensen finds it most plausible that the modern Scottish forms reflect an ON *bólstaðr*, although she does signal that both may be the source.

Fellows-Jensen's article is one of the best-structured articles about ON *bólstaðr* as a generic and its usage in Norway and the North Atlantic. Her views are based solidly on her own interpretations of the general distribution of ON *bólstaðr* coupled, or juxtaposed, with the findings of earlier scholars' work.

The only article to have been devoted entirely to ON *bólstaðr*, appeared in 1994, when **Richard Cox** published 'Descendants of Norse *bólstaðr*?': A re-examination of the lineage of *Bost & Co.*'.<sup>62</sup>

In this article, Cox makes a critical re-examination of Nicolaisen's the-

61. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

62. Cox, Richard, 'Descendants of Norse *bólstaðr*?': A Re-Examination of the Lineage of *Bost & Co.*', in Baldwin, John R. (ed.), *Peoples & Settlement in North-West Ross*, (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 43-67.

sis (see above) that modern reflexes such as *-bist*, *-bister*, *-bust*, *-buster*, *-bost*, *-pster*, *-mster*, *-bus*, *-boll*, *-poll*, *-pool*, and *-bo*, descend directly from ON *bólstaðr*. Although Cox recognises Nicolaisen's work as important, he nevertheless has some reservations, especially on derivation but also on chronology. He limits himself to the Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland and he bases his work on modern phonetic renderings to support his interpretations.

He starts off by (rightly) eliminating names of the *Papyli* type (modern reflex *-ble*) from the list of reflexes descending from ON *bólstaðr*. Then he goes on to examine the reflex *Boust*, *Bosta*, *-bost* and *-busta*. His conclusion is that the latter example is from ON *bústaðr* whereas the former examples originate from ON *bólstaðr*. The reflexes *-bol*, *-boll*, *-bo*, *-poll*, *-pool*, Cox mostly derives from ON *pollr*, but is cautious enough to say that some may derive from ON *ból*. The north-eastern Scottish examples are to him mostly from ON *ból*. The southern *-bolls*, *-bols* > *-bus* reflexes may, according to Cox, reflect ON *bólstaðr*, but he prefers a postulated *\*-bólshagi* as the origin, because of a higher phonetic compatibility with this constructed form rather than with ON *bólstaðr*. The reflexes considered by Nicolaisen to originate from ON *bólstaðr* originate, according to Cox, from six different appellative constructions. To Cox, this shows that the settlement phase of Scotland is 'more serial and complex than had hitherto been thought'.

Cox's article is probably the most important article on ON *bólstaðr* to have appeared in the last many years. The article's merits are not only in being an eye opener. Too little attention has been spent by scholars on re-examining the work of previous scholars. Cox works on a solid foundation of linguistics, although his theories possibly rely too heavily on phonetics. For instance, he does not use other documentary sources to support his findings. Therefore, some of his theories seem somewhat bold – as his *\*bólshagi* theory certainly is – and he does not reckon with influences such as analogy in his interpretations.

In 1995, **William P. L. Thomson** presents a critical assessment of Marwick's farm name chronology in the article 'Orkney farm-names: a reassessment of their chronology', (in Crawford, B.E., *Scandinavian Settlement in Northern Britain: Thirteen Studies of Place-Names in their Historical Context*, (Leicester, 1995)). As the title suggests, the article is a reassessment of Marwick's much appraised and much copied farm-name chronology for Orkney. Thomson starts out by explaining from what sources Marwick himself hatched the idea of a farm-name chronology and how Marwick's ideas have later been applied to other areas.



According to Thomson, there seems to be nothing inherently wrong with Marwick's thesis, on a superficial level at least, as an area such as South Walls shows that the various elements for which Marwick devised a primary-secondary-peripheral chronology are largely found where they would be expected to appear. However, since Marwick's thesis depends partly on a taxation basis and partly on a settlement pattern like that described in the *Landnámabók*, there are some inherent flaws in the theory. Marwick's assumption that the taxation system was imposed as a result of Harald Finehair's expedition to Orkney in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and that it had remained largely unchanged throughout the Middle Ages is now not thought to be valid, especially not the early date for the taxation system. That the settlement process in Orkney would have been different from that in Iceland is clear from the fact that Orkney was an already populated and farmed area when the Scandinavians arrived to settle there – a situation different from that of Iceland. According to Thomson, it would be unlikely to have marked out large blocks of territory without reference to the already established farm structures (the work of the Picts).

Another reason to doubt a 'chronology' in strict terms is the fact that the generics were active simultaneously and not consecutively. Marwick's sequences led to the belief that many generics ceased to be actively employed in the coining of names at an early stage. Thomson refutes this by showing how ON *skáli* (> Ork. *skail*) continued to be used as a name-forming element until as late as the 19<sup>th</sup> c.

With this in mind, Thomson then goes on to formulate his own theory. He argues that:

It is not safe to use generics as an automatic mechanism for putting names into sequence, and even less safe to try to assign dates on the basis of tax-paying. Instead of thinking in terms of chronology, it is useful to think of the Norse generics as forming a group [...] which might be applied to farms. [...] Norse names [...] are primarily concerned with the nature of the farm rather than its age. It seems likely that the Norse arrived in Orkney with a whole range of names for farms, some old and some not so old in a Norwegian context, but all capable of being applied from the first in Orkney – in whatever were appropriate circumstances.<sup>63</sup>

63. Thomson, W. P. L., 'Orkney farm-names: a re-assessment of their chronology', in Crawford, B. E. (ed.), *Scandinavian Settlement in Northern Britain: Thirteen Studies of Place-Names in their Historical Context*, (Leicester, 1995), p. 51.



In discussing some of the core generics relevant to his theory, Thomson sees settlements with names originating from ON *bólstaðr* as being large and often fairly low-lying, but with no particular siting characteristics in relation to hill or coast. Thomson analyses *bólstaðr* as a compound of *ból*, 'an allocation, portion' + *staðr* 'a place'. In Norway, *bólstaðr* was frequently used when home-fields were divided. The same is applicable in Thomson's opinion to the Orkney examples, in as much as they often occur in pairs, signalling a splitting up of a township. The facts that *bólstaðr* generics are frequently used for urislands, and that in parts of Scotland where *baile* 'township, extended farm' and *bólstaðr* names are found side by side they are often equivalent to each other, mean to Thomson that the settlements bearing *bólstaðr* names were often multi-tenanted townships. Thomson also suggests that *bólstaðr* was a successful generic throughout the Middle Ages, its spread:

halted only by the late Medieval climatic deterioration combined with more difficult economic and political conditions for township-splitting which generated many of the *bólstaðr*-names.<sup>64</sup>

Thomson presents a very well constructed article on the dangers of accepting a 'chronology' of farm names. His points on ON *bólstaðr* are original and demonstrate his profound understanding of Orkney and her onomastic situation.

## 4.2. The phonetic development of *-bólstaðr*

It is difficult to account for the development of ON *bólstaðr* in Scotland because of the variety of linguistic situations. When the Scandinavians arrived in Scotland, the country was far from unified, let alone monolingual. In the south-east were Angles, in the south-west Brittonic speaking Celts, in Argyll and parts of the Hebrides reigned Gaels. The rest of Scotland was inhabited by Picts, of whose language we have little knowledge, apart from the fact that it was probably heavily admixed with Gaelic – at least in central Scotland at the time when the Norwegians developed an interest in the country. In the north and for a time in the Hebrides, the Scandinavians managed to retain power and in this way Old Norse became the dominant tongue in these parts. The Hebrides and north Mainland gradually became Gaelic-speaking and later on the Northern Isles gradually dropped their Norn

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64. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

tongue in favour of Lowland Scots. Needless to say, this huge diversity has resulted in great linguistic differences. Especially the Gaelic-speaking areas, such as the Hebrides, are difficult to deal with for a non-Gaelic speaker. Therefore, my account of the developments of *bólstaðr* in those areas will rely heavily on the work of Gaelic scholars. To ease the understanding of the developments in the various areas and their interdependence, there will be a division of the relevant areas of Scotland into: the North (incl. Shetland, Orkney, Caithness & Sutherland); the West (incl. Lewis, Harris, Uist, Skye, Coll, Tiree and North Mull); and the South-west (incl. South Mull, Islay and the rest of Western Argyll). Under all circumstances, the models for the developments of ON *bólstaðr* in Scotland are more or less hypothetical, the reason being that there is no knowledge about when and how Scandinavian was superseded by Gaelic and Scots. Most research has really only been focused on a change from an 'ideal' or 'complete' ON language to a completely Gaelic language. Of course research has to act in this way when nothing is known about any Scottish Norse sub-dialect, or the time span in which a community whose 'official' language was Norse developed into a fully Gaelic/Scots community. The uncertainties by far outnumber facts when dealing with the situation in Scotland.

As a simplex formation, ON *bólstaðr* is found in much smaller numbers than are compounds. Therefore, the interpretation of the simplex developments will rely more on individual reflexes than on sheer bulk. Nevertheless, the following outlines may be drawn. With modern reflexes such as *Bousta* ['busta], *Busta* ['busta], *Busti(tun)* ['bøstə], in the North, *Bosta* ['bɔːstə], *Boust* ['bɔusta], *Bousd* ['bɔust], in the West, and *Bolsay* ['bɔʊlsə] and *Bolsa* in the South-west ascribed to ON *bólstaðr*, it would seem, at first sight, that these names cannot all be of the same origin.<sup>65</sup> However, if we concentrate on what these reflexes have in common, then we may see that this is exactly what they are.

If we compare them with ON *bólstaðr* we see that a feature common to all the examples is the loss of the final consonant [-ð] + inflectional mark-

65. The Shetland examples *Bousta* and *Busta* may, formally, equally well be from ON *bústaðr*, m., as ON [o:], as well as ON [u:] may develop into Shetl. [u] (cf. Jakobsen 1928, p. XLVII). According to Jakobsen, it would seem that an origin in ON [u:] is the most plausible because of its more commonly changing into Shetl. [u] than ON [o:]. However, when considering that the modern reflex of ON *bólstr*, n., 'a bolster, a cushion' is Shetl. *buster* ['buster] ['bostər], showing forms in both [u] and [o], then ON *bólstaðr*, m., must certainly also be taken into consideration.

er. This is also the case with Norwegian simplex examples (see above). The reason for this is that Germanic has the main stress on the initial syllable, thus rendering the final element unstressed and susceptible to loss. This change occurred early in Norway and, although this need not always have been the case in the colonies in Scotland, the same guiding principle seems to have been in force here too. It should be mentioned that this loss has not necessarily taken place in a purely Scandinavian linguistic context but may also have occurred in a Gaelic one (Cox 1994, pp. 46-50; 59). However, since Gaelic and Scandinavian were probably introduced into the Hebrides around the same time, it would be doubtful if any of the changes there have occurred in a 'pure' linguistic situation. Nevertheless, the occurrence of a feature such as final [-ɣ] in Lewis cannot be taken as proof of the change having occurred in a Gaelic context. This final element is not a present-day Gaelic rendering of an original final [-ð] + inflectional marker. On the contrary, it is a common local dialectal feature designed to close an otherwise open syllable (Cox 1994, p. 46). Most of the examples show the loss of [l] in the consonant cluster [lst] – bar in the South-west, where the phonetic situation is different for some reason. This is contrary to most of the Norwegian counterparts, of which all but one have retained their medial [l]. Only the simplex *Bolstad* ['bosta] in Oppstryn sokn, Sogn og Fjordane fylke in Norway, has dropped its [l] and this only at a very recent date. However, medial [l] must occupy a relatively weak position, being part of a cluster of three consonants. If we turn to the Norwegian compounded counterparts, they all shed this consonant. It is conceivable that when ON *bólstaðr* comes into contact with a different language – especially one which like Gaelic is so hostile to long consonant clusters – the weakest consonant in the [lst] combination is dropped to facilitate an easier adoption into the new linguistic situation. Lowland Scots also displays some degree of hostility to at least the [lst] consonant cluster, cf. e.g. the pronunciation of Scots *bolster/bowster*, 'a bolster, a cushion' which is ['baustər]/['bostər].<sup>66</sup> That the [l] has survived in Islay seemingly at the expense of [t] is somewhat puzzling – even to the extent that a different origin for this regional *bólstaðr* reflex has been suggested.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, this peculiarity is founded in a local Islay and Mull

66. Robinson, Mairi, *Chambers. The concise Scots dictionary* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 58.

67. Cf. Cox, Richard 'Descendants of Norse *bólstaðr*?: A re-examination of the lineage of Bost & co.', in Baldwin, John R. (ed.), *Peoples & settlement in North-west Ross*, (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 57-61. Cox argues that the phonetic evidence rather pointed towards an origin in *\*bólshagi*, m., but since this form is constructed and not attested elsewhere, Cox' supposition appears unlikely to be correct.

dialectal feature, whereby [ɾ] in the combination [stɾ] is dropped when it is part of an unstressed syllable. The consonant cluster thus having been reduced to two consonants, original [l] is retained because it is no longer under pressure, as it had been in a triconsonantal situation.<sup>68</sup>

It only remains to describe the vowel sounds. Original [a] is mostly retained, as is normal in Norway, too. The stem vowel, however, has developed in various ways. In the West and South-west, the original vowel has retained its quantity, [-ɔ:-], has been diphthongised to [-ɔu-], according to Cox (1994, pp. 46-50; 59). He is of the opinion that this is owing to a secondary lengthening as the result of the loss of the following consonant ([l]). However, this is not the case with the Islay example which has retained the following consonant, so it is probably safest to assume that the stem vowels of the modern reflexes descend directly from original [-o:-]. In the Northern Isles (there are no examples of simplex formations in Caithness) the stem vowels have been shortened, either to [-u-] (Shetland) or [-ø-] (Orkney). And as such they follow the general tendency in Norway, where the stem vowel is shortened when situated before a long consonant or consonant cluster. In Norway the change takes place c. 1100-1350 (Seip 1955, p. 112), but it may well have occurred later in the Northern Isles. All we can say is that if the change is parallel to that in Norway, the change must have occurred prior to the shedding of [l]. However, the short stem vowel here may be a result of other changes unrelated to any occurring in Norway. It is just curious that the same vowel feature occurs where it is known that Scandinavian was spoken the longest in Scotland. A warning must be sounded for the Shetland examples because the modern reflex, [busta], may formally be from either ON *bólstaðr*, m., or ON *bústaðr*, m. There is nothing in the modern reflexes to distinguish between the two appellatives. Unfortunately, neither do the written sources offer any help in the matter, as the first records only appear in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, long after Scots influence had started to make its impression on the Norn of the Northern Isles. Therefore, there is no trace of an original [l] in the recorded forms of simplex formations.

When compounded, the modern reflexes of *bólstaðr* are: *-bister* ['bɪstər]/['bæstər], *-buster* ['bestər], *-bist* ['bæst], *-bster* ['bstər], *-pster* ['pstər], *-mster* ['mstər] (if preceded by a nasal), and *-ster* ['stər], in the North;

68. Cf. Gammeltoft, Peder, 'Why the Difference? An Attempt to Account for the Variations in the Phonetic Development of Place-Names in Old Norse *bólstaðr* in the Hebrides' *Nomina*, 23. (2000), pp. 107-119.

-*bost* ['bɔst] and -*busta* ['-basta] in the West;<sup>69</sup> in the South-west, -*bolles* ['-basəy] (if preceded by one syllable) and -*bus* ['-bas] (if preceded by two syllables), as well as possibly [-*vos(t)*] in the Isle of Man.<sup>70</sup> It is immediately clear that the range of modern reflexes is far greater than is the case with the simplex formations. The reason for this is the fact that when compounded *bólstaðr* is placed in a final position, it is more susceptible to change. The linguistic situation in any area thus leaves its distinct impression on the modern expression. Ironically, the areas in which Scandinavian first dropped out of use are the areas that have preserved the form closest to the original ON form. In the Hebrides, the modern reflexes show a greater resemblance to the original *bólstaðr* than they often do in the Northern Isles and adjacent mainland.

Nevertheless, there are a number of features in common. The most prominent is the lack of [ð]. As in Norway, this is because of its position before [r] in an unstressed syllable as already mentioned (Seip 1955, pp. 158-9). ON [l] has also been dropped, which is owing to its position in a consonant cluster of three consonants, [lst]. The Islay compounds are now also [l]-less, but according to the written sources for the area, they all featured an [l] until recently. The reason for this is combinatory. In Islay, [t] is dropped in the combination [st] when unstressed (see under simplex formations above), thereby 'liberating' the lateral consonant from the pressure of being the 'weakest' in a triconsonantal cluster. In recent times, original [l] has, nevertheless, been dropped in the combination [ls]. The greatest difference in the modern appearance of the element between the Hebrides and the Northern Isles and adjacent mainland, as regards consonants, is the retention of the masc. nominative inflectional -r in the Northern Isles and its loss in the Hebrides. In the Northern Isles the inflectional -r appears to have attained a syllabic status early on by having had a svarabhakti vowel inserted between it and the preceding consonant, as

69. The -*busta* ending of *Heribusta*, Skye, Inv., has typically been ascribed to ON *bólstaðr*, m., but Dr. Cox has raised doubts as to whether this is the correct origin. He is of the opinion that the origin is rather ON *bústaðr*, m. However, the 1630 source form *Tarrabost* (Retours, Inv., 50) shows quite clearly that Cox' assumption cannot be right. Cf. Cox, Richard, 'Descendants of Norse *bólstaðr*?: A re-examination of the lineage of Bost & co.', in Baldwin, John R. (ed.), *Peoples & settlement in North-west Ross*, (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 50.

70. I have chosen to place the Isle of Man under Scotland instead of on its own, owing to the fact that this area is represented by only one place-name of possible *bólstaðr*-origin.

has also happened in modern Icelandic (see Ch. 5.1., below).<sup>71</sup> When the preceding [ð] was dropped, this svarabhakti vowel fell together with the now preceding [a] sound (now found as [ə] or occasionally [e]), having undergone further reduction. In the Hebrides, however, there never seems to have been such a supporting vowel inserted between [ð] and [r]. So either the inflectional ending was lost with [ð] or Scandinavian ceased to be spoken there before a svarabhakti vowel could develop. In Iceland the svarabhakti vowel starts to appear in writing in the 13<sup>th</sup> century before final -r, so it is plausible that it may have appeared in the spoken language around the same time in Scotland.

Turning to the vowels, common to all areas is the quantitative reduction of the stem vowel. This occurs because the stem vowel only bears secondary stress. In Man, the quality of the stem vowel appears to have been retained, whereas in the Outer Hebrides it has been opened to [ɔ]. The reason here is that the generic element early on became monosyllabic and the original quality has thereby had a better chance of being retained. Everywhere else the generic element has consisted of two syllables until relatively recently, resulting in a further qualitative change. In its purest form, this qualitative change results in a fronting *cum* laxing of the stem vowel to a central pronunciation. Orthographically, this manifests itself in spellings in /u/ or /i/ for the medial vowels [ə]/[a], which are hard to represent properly in any other way. In Islay the modern reflexes are [-basəŋ] and [-bas]. Long ON loans in Gaelic, including names, have almost invariably been reduced to a maximum of three syllables in their modern form (Cox 1994, p. 59). Therefore, *bólstaðr* place-names with modern specific reflexes of one syllable have a disyllabic generic element, where-

71. That the masculine nominative sg. -r inflectional ending has survived in *-bister* may appear somewhat strange in the light of the fact that this inflectional element is normally lost after 1300 (cf. Seip 1955, p. 303). Nevertheless, in Shetland and Orkney the masculine nominative sg. -r has survived in a few words (see Jakobsen 1928, I, p. xxxvii; Marwick 1995 (reprint), p. 23). For instance, Shetl. *guster* [gustər], sb., 'a strong, drying wind, a squall of wind' derives from ON *gustr*, m., 'a gust of wind'. The [-ər] reflects the nominative masculine sg. -r, as does the [-ər] of *hoger* [ho:gər] (< ON *hagr*, m., 'a state or condition'), and *kepper* [kepər] (< ON *keppr*, m., 'a stick') (cf. Jakobsen 1928, I, pp. 280, 326, 409). In these cases where the inflectional ending has survived, the svarabhakti vowel seems to have been a determining factor. The reduction in the case system cannot but have played a role as well. However, the nominative masculine sg. remnant [-ər], owing to its final, unstressed, position, is often not very stable. This is for instance seen in *gust* [gust], a side-form of Shetl. *guster*, and in place-names in Orkney where *-bist* is a variant form of the usual Northern Isles *bólstaðr*-reflex, *-bister*.

as this element is monosyllabic if the modern specific reflex consists of two syllables. However, the historical sources strongly suggest that the now monosyllabic generic reflexes have been disyllabic until recently, so the modern broad [a] sound must be ascribed to this former disyllabic structure. In the North, the disyllabic generic structure has also been subject to reduction, especially so with mainland examples, so that the first vowel of the generic has been dropped, such as in the modern Caithness representations in: *-bster* ['-bstər], *-pster* ['-pstər], *-mster* ['-mstər] and *-ster* ['-stər] (cf. also Coates 1976, pp. 188-90). In Shetland and Orkney, the modern reflex is usually [ə] or [ɪ] and very occasionally [e]. The most original pronunciation must be said to be the *schwa*, for the reason explained above. Shetl. [ɪ] seems to be a spelling-derived pronunciation from Shetl. /-bɪster/. Original [a] has been partly preserved as [ə], and that only in the North and partly in the South-west.

### 4.3. Place-names in *-bólstaðr* in Scotland

#### Simplex formations:

I have chosen not to list all the simplex *bólstaðr*-place-names together, as the *Scotia Scandinavica* area contains several distinct linguistic situations. In order to explain properly the linguistic influence of each distinct area on the simplex *bólstaðr*-place-names found there, the simplex examples are grouped according to similar linguistic developments.

#### BOLSA, BOLSAY

1. Bolsa, S, NR 386 775, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Bolse* 1542 RMS (III, 2835); *Bolsay* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Bow* 1615 Retours (Arg., 16); *Bols* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Bolsay* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Bols* 1630 RMS (VIII, 1610); *Bolstig* 1662 Blaeu (123-5); [*Port Boldstig* 1662 Blaeu (123-5)], *Bols* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67); *Bolsay* 1662 Retours (Arg., 68); *Bolsay* 1665 RMS (XI, 778); *Bolsa* 1751 McDougall.

2. Bolsay, S, NR 227 572, Parish of Kilchoman, Islay, Argyllshire.  
[*boulsa*] 1994 Cox (p. 59).

The origin of these two names is probably ON *bólstaðr*, m., 'a farm'. Although the source forms with these place-names are mostly radically different to those of other Hebridean forms, there seems to be little doubt as to their origin. Usually, an [l] would be dropped in the consonant clus-

ter [-*lst*-], as is evidenced in names such as *Bosta*, Uig, Lewis (Seip, 1955, p. 155; Cox 1994, p. 59). However, it is a peculiarity of Islay that [t] in the combination [st] in unstressed position is dropped, as is also evident in the compound formations.

For the development of ON *bólstaðr*, m., as a simplex place-name, see Ch. 4.2.

## **BOLSAY see s.n. BOLSA**

## **BOSTA, BOUSD, \*BOUST**

1. Bosta, S, NB 138 402, Uig Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

*Busta* 1776 Mackenzie; *Bustu* 1804 Heather; *Bosta* 1821 Johnson; *Bosta* 1832 Thomson; [*bɔːstay*] 1954 Oftedal (p. 379).

2. Bosta, S, NB 184 409, Uig Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

3. Bosta, S, Stornoway Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

4. Bousd, S, NM 254 635, Island of Coll, Argyllshire.

[*Port Boldstig* c. 1734 van Keulen]; [*boust*] 1994 Cox (p. 46).

5. \*Boust, R, NG 357 374, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire.

[*bɔusta*] 1994 Cox (p. 46).

The origin of these names is most likely ON *bólstaðr*, m. (cf. Capt. Thomas 1876, p. 479; Oftedal 1954, p. 379; Cox 1994, pp. 46-50). No. 3 has only ever been recorded by Duncan.<sup>72</sup> His interpretation is 'a place, point' at Swordale on the Eye Peninsula. No. 5 is a formally secondary name, *Boust Hill*, which refers – it would appear – to a hill, but the element *Boust* seems to be of the same origin as the other names here (cf. Forbes 1923, p. 88).

For the development of ON *bólstaðr*, m., as a simplex place-name, see Ch. 4.2.

## **BOUSD see s.n. BOSTA**

## **\*BOUST see s.n. BOSTA**

72. Duncan, A., *Norse Place-Names, Chiefly from Lewis and Harris, Obtained from the Year 1930 and Onwards*, (unpublished manuscript of phonetic transcriptions, c. 1930. Privately owned).



## BOUSTA, BUSTA, BUSTATOUN

1a. Bousta, HU 223 578, Parish of Walls & Sandness, Shetland.  
*Bustaid* 1582 SheDoc (42); *Bousta* 1602 CBS1; *Bousta* 1695 Retours (O&S, 155); *Bousta* 1781 Preston; *Muckle Bousta* 1878 OS1; [*busta*] 1987 Stewart (p. 56).

1b. Little Bousta, HU 222 578, Parish of Walls & Sandness, Shetland.

2. Busta, S, HZ 207 700, Fair Isle, Dunrossness Parish, Shetland.  
*Buister* 1590 RMS (V, 1723); *Bustay* 1603 CBS1; *Busta* 1839 Admiralty; [*busta*] 1987 Stewart (p. 253).

3. Bustatoun, S, HY 763 524, North Ronaldsay, Parish of Cross & Burness, Orkney.

*Nes-busta* 1591 RMS (V, 1895); *Bousta* 1646 RMS (IX, 1624); *Bousta* 1646 RMS (IX, 1626); *Ness-busta* 1652 RMS (X, 61); *Bowsta* 1655 Retours (O&S, 69); *Nesse Bousta* 1663 RMS (XI, 362); *Bousta* 1698 Retours (O&S, 156); *Buista* 1733 OR; [*bøstitun*] 1952 Marwick (p. 1); [*bøstə*] 1952 Marwick (p. 1).

According to Stewart (1987, p. 56, 59) and Marwick (1952, p. 1), the names originate from either ON *bólstaðr*, m., or ON *bústaðr*, m. Exactly which of these is not always determinable. For instance *Bousta* (no. 1a) and *Busta* (no. 2) may be *bústaðr*, as ON [u:] more commonly develops into Shetl. [u] than ON [o:]. No. 3, *Bustatoun*, also seems to point to *bústaðr*, but only apparently so. The pronunciation rather suggests *bólstaðr*, as it is usually only ON [o:] which develops into Ork. [ø] (ON [u:] is either retained, or becomes [u]/[ø:] in Orkney (cf. Marwick 1995, p. 32)). Therefore, the interpretation must remain open for these names.

No. 1b, *Little Bousta* is a secondary settlement to *Bousta*. 'Little' is used in reciprocation with the parent settlement (which in turn is occasionally called 'Muckle Bousta'). Since it is a secondary formation from *Bousta*, it will not be used in further calculations, hence the numbering 1a and 1b.

*Bustatoun* (no. 3) is a rather complex name. Today it is a formally secondary name, but earlier it seems to have been a primary formation, either as a simplex name (*Bousta*) or a compound (*Nes(s)-busta*). Although some documentary evidence seems to suggest otherwise, the name is probably an original simplex name. The confusing element here is that it seems to have been listed with another simplex name, *Ness*, now *Nesstoun*, in some documents. *Bustatoun* is also the old name for the entire tunship. Marwick (1952, p. 1) is of the opinion that the original name of the tunship was *Kirbist*, but nothing suggests that this was so. The earliest reference to *Kirbist* ("Kirbist in the 8d. land of Buista" (1733 OR)) clearly shows that *Kirbist* is subordinate to *Bustatoun*.

**BUSTA** see s.n. **BOUSTA**

**BUSTATOUN** see s.n. **BOUSTA**

**Compound formations:**

**\*ABOIST, ABOS**

1. \*Aboist, R, NG 16 52, Parish of Durinish, Skye, Inverness-shire.

2. Abos, S, NM 408 415, island of Ulva, Parish of Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon, Mull, Argyllshire.

*Abos* 1630 Retours (Arg., 36); *Abose* 1683 Retours (Arg., 86) 1751 *Abost* (Valuation Roll); 1771 *Abbst* (Notice of Sale); *Abos* in 1832 (Private Census)<sup>73</sup>.

The specific is ON *á*, f., 'a stream', and the generic is most probably ON *bólstaðr*, m., 'a farm'.

One of the names, \**Aboist* (no. 1), is no longer found as an independent place-name, but is found in the formally secondary place-name, *Eas Aboist*, where Gaelic *eas*, m., 'a waterfall' is the generic.

**ABOS** see s.n. **\*ABOIST**

**AIKERBISTER**

Aikerbister †, HY 48 01, Holm Parish, Orkney.

*Akyrbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 48); *Aikarbustar* 1500 OR; *Akurbuster* 1574 REO (p. 274); *Aikerbuster* 1595 OR; *Akerbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Akurbuster* 1614 OR; *Aikerbuster* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2244); *Aickerbuster* 1642 OR; *Aikerbuster* 1657 RMS (X, 593); *Aikerbuster* 1739 OR; *Acrobuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

The specific is ON *akr*, m., 'a field, a cultivated field'.

**AIMSTER**

Aimster, S, ND 117 632, Parish of Thurso, Caithness.

*Ambuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Ambuster* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Almister* 1592 RMS (V, 2078); *Ambuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Ainbuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Aimstir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Aimster* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Ainister* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Ambuster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8);

73. The 1751, 1755, and 1832 forms have been supplied by Ian Fraser, School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh.

*Amster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Amster* 1750 Dorret; *Aimster* 1798 BV; *Amster* 1832 Thomson; [*emstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 142).

Waugh (1985, p. 142) interpreted the specific as the ON personal name *Ambi*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 22), or the ON personal name *Áni*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 29-30). Phonetically, Waugh's former suggestion does not seem possible as original short [a] does not become Cai. [e], whereas ON [a:] may do so (Waugh 1985, appendix). The inflectional ending must have been dropped early on, owing to its unstressed position, thus creating the consonant cluster [-nb-] to develop into [-mb-] and later to [-m-].

### ALABOST

Alabost, S, NA 987 146, Isle of Harris, Inverness-shire.

[*alabɔst*] c. 1930 Duncan.

It is tempting to interpret the specific as the ON personal name *Áli*, m., but this does not seem to correspond well with the short vowel sound which Duncan has recorded. Another possibility might be ON *alfr*, m., 'an elf, fairy'. In the stem form, ON [-f-] would have been dropped early on, being situated between two consonants (Seip 1955 p. 156). Subsequently, a svarabhakti vowel would have been inserted to ease the pronunciation for Gaelic speakers (cp. e.g. [*aɫapɔ*], *Alba*, in Borgstrøm 1940, p. 212, & §298, pp. 213-4). However, owing to the lack of additional documentation, this interpretation cannot be proven sufficiently and the interpretation must remain open.

### ARNABOST

Arnabost, S, NM 209 600, Island of Coll, Argyllshire.

*Arnapoldo* 1528 RMS (III, 712); *Arnapoldo* 1542 RMS (III, 2787); *Arnapoldo* 1558 RSS (V, 389); *Arnapoldo* 1617 RMS (VII, 1652); *Arnapoldo* 1642 Retours (Arg., 59); *Arnepoldo* 1643 RMS (IX, 1310); *Arnapoldo* 1656 RMS (X, 531); *Ardnepoldo* 1674 Retours (Arg., 81).

The specific is either the ON personal name *Arni*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 47-8), or perhaps more likely *arna*, the genitive pl. of ON *ørn*, m., 'a eagle'.

All the written forms have the ending *-poldo* – a rather odd reflex of *bólstaðr*, even when Latinised as here. It would be more plausible to ascribe this ending to either ON *ból*, n., 'a farm' or ON *pollr*, m., 'a pond, a small rounded bay'. Nevertheless, the *-poldo* endings are probably misrepresentations of *bólstaðr*, as the modern reflex is *-bost*, so clearly identifiable with *bólstaðr* in Scotland.

## ASABUS

Asabus, S, NR 304 427, Parish of Kildalton & Oa, Islay, Argyllshire.  
*Assibus* 1751 McDougall.

The specific appears to be ON *áss*, m., 'a hill-crest, a mountain ridge'. The medial vowel, /-i-/ or /-a-/, is possibly the remnant of a masculine genitive sg. u-stem inflection, or alternatively a svarabhakti vowel has been added to aid the pronunciation of the consonant cluster (cf. the principle in Borgstrøm 1940, § 298, pp. 213-4).

## \*BHRANNABUIS

\*Bhrannabuis, R, NR 338 473, Parish of Kildalton & Oa, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Branabols* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Barnabols* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Branabollis* 1662 Retours (Arg., 68); *Barnabols* 1665 RMS (XI, 778).

The specific is either ON *brandr*, m., 'a fire, a burning', or ON *brenna*, f., 'a fire, a burning' (cf. Gillies 1906, p. 224). Judging from the sources, the former seems the most likely.

This name is no longer in use and there is no certain trace on the modern OS 1:25.000 map of the settlement to which this name referred (it might be the ruin called *Goirtean Dubh*, though). The only remnant of the name today is in the topographical feature *Cnocan Bhrannabuis*.

## BILBSTER, BYLBSTER

1. Bilbster, S, ND 279 530, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Ouir Bulbistar*, *Nethir Bulbistar* 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Nethir Bulbuster*, *Ovir Bulbuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Bulbuster*, *Nether & Over* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Nether-Bulbuster*, *Over Bulbuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Nether Bulbuster*, *Over Bulbuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Nether Bulbuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Over Bilbistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Nather et Over Balbuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Over Bulbuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 288); *Nathir et Ovir Bilbester* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Nethir Balbuster* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Nether Bulbuster*, *Nethercalbuster*, *Overbalbuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Bylbuster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *O. Bilbuster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Nether Bilbster* 1666 RMS (XI, 958); *Nether Bylbister* 1667 RMS (XI, 1070); *Balbuster* 1671 Retours (Cai., 28); *Bilbster* 1724 Macfarlane (I, 157); *Bilpster* 1726 Macfarlane (I, 160); *Bylbster* 1750 Dorret; *Bilbster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Bilbster* 1832 Thomson; [*bʲilpstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 375).

2. Bylbster, S, ND 256 538, Parish of Watten, Caithness.

*Bylebyster* 1527 RMS (III, 475); *Bulbuster* 1546 Sinclair (Mey); *Bylbistir*

1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Bilbester* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Bylbuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Byl buster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Bylpster* 1755 Roy (38-1); *Bylpster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Bylbyster* 1832 Thomson; [*'baibstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 375); [*'baipstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 375).

These two names are puzzling. The settlement areas to which they refer border each other, but happen to be situated in different parishes. Since their documentary forms are very similar, it is possible that they are of identical origin. It may even be that the two settlements were once one and the same and were only subsequently split up after the imposition of parish distinctions. According to Waugh (1985, p. 375), the present-day pronunciation may be a recent attempt at distinguishing the settlements from each other by means of spelling-based pronunciations.

Waugh has interpreted the specific (of no. 1) as an ON personal name *Bili*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 139). However, I do not find this possibility very likely, as this personal name is almost undocumented. Judging from the sources, the original stem vowel appears to have been [-y-] (typically represented in Caithness as /u/, /i/, or /e/, according to Waugh (1985, Appendix). Of alternative possibilities with an original [-y-], ON *bylr*, m., 'a forceful wind-blow' can hardly be seriously considered. The interpretation of these names must remain open.

## BIMBISTER

Bimbister, S, HY 325 167, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney.

*Bimbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 53); *Binbustare* 1500 OR; *Benbuster* 1552 REO (p. 246); *Binbustar* 1595 OR; *Bimbusta* 1603 SheDoc (369); *Bimbester* 1620 DOH (III, p. 101); *Bimbister* 1727 OR; [*'bɪmbəstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 141).

The specific is uncertain (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 141) but might be ON *bingr*, m. which may mean either 'a division (in a house)', or 'the designation of a locality of a special character, possibly a bend of a stream, or a small settlement area limited in size by nature'. *Bimbister* is located on a wedge caused by a fork in the *Burn of Netherborough*. It might be this topographical peculiarity that has spurred the naming.

The change from ON [-ng-] > Ork. [-m-] is somewhat unusual, as the change is normally ON [-ng-] > Ork. [ŋ]. Nevertheless, it is probable that the ensuing labial consonant has caused an assimilation of early Ork. [-ŋ-] > Ork. [-m-] (Marwick, 1995, p. 36). For the development of the generic, see Ch. 4.2.

**BRABSTER, BRABUSTIR, BRAEBUSTER, BREABOST, BRE-BISTER, BREBUSTER, BREIBISTER, PRABOST**

1. Brabster, S, ND 316 692, Parish of Canisbay, Caithness.  
[*Brabstermyre* 1538 RMS (III, 1798)]; *Brabistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508);  
[*Brabstermire* 1661 RMS (XI, 53)]; *Brabuster* 1662 Blaeu; [*Brabstermyre*  
1671 Retours (Cai., 28)]; *Braibister* 1755 Roy (37-3); *Brabstar*, *Braibster*  
1807 Arrowsmith; [*Brabstermire* 1832 Thomson]; [*brēpstār*] 1985 Waugh  
(p. 289).

2. \*Brabster, S, ND 230 605, Parish of Bower, Caithness.  
*Brabister-dorane* 1538 RMS (III, 1798); *Brabusterdorane* 1549 RSS (IV,  
333); *Brabuster-dorane* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Brabister-durhaine* 1587  
RMS (V, 1341); *Brabusterdoran* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Brabusterdorane*  
1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Brabisterdurhaine* 1612 RMS (VII, 766);  
*Brabister* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Brabusterdoran* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251);  
*Brabusterdoran* 1630 Retours (Cai., 17); *Bralister* 1632 RMS (VIII,  
1917); *Brabisterdurhaine* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2207); *Brabusterdorane* 1644  
Retours (Cai., 22); *Brabisterdoran*, *Brabisterdorann* 1661 RMS (XI, 53);  
*Brabuster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Urdbstirdoran* ? 1667 RMS (XI, 1070);  
*Brabsterdoran* 1671 Retours (Cai., 28); *Brabster Dorren* 1807  
Arrowsmith; *Brabster-dorren* 1832 Thomson.

3. Brabustir †, S, HY 67 44, Parish of Cross & Burness, Sanday,  
Orkney.  
*Brabustir* 1500 OR; *Brabustar* 1595 OR; *Brebuster* 1776 Mackenzie;  
[*braibest*] 1952 Marwick (p. 6).

4. Braebuster, S, HY 220 050, Parish of Hoy & Graemsay, Orkney.  
*Brabustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 72); *Brabustir* 1500 OR; *Brabustare* 1595 OR;  
*Brabister* 1612 OrkTes (no. 40); *Brabuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119);  
*Brabuster* 1620 DOH (III, p. 109); *Brabuster* 1621 RMS (VIII, 141);  
*Brabuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Brabuster* 1663 RMS (XI, 470); *Brebuster*  
1776 Mackenzie.

5. Braebuster, S, HY 547 052, Parish of St. Andrews & Deerness,  
Orkney.  
*Brabustare* 1500 OR; *Brabuster* 1531 REO (p. 214); *Brabester* 1580  
DOH (I, p. 198); *Brabister* 1584 REO (p. 304); *Brabustare*, *Brabustar*  
1595 OR; *Brabuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Brebuster* 1776 Mackenzie;  
[*brebestār*] 1952 Marwick (p. 76).

6. Breabost, NG 362 538, Parish of Snizort, Skye, Inverness-shire.  
*Brebast* 1776 Mackenzie; *Braebost* 1832 Thomson.

7. Brebuster, HY 51 41, Parish of Westray, Orkney.

*Brabustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 61); *Braebuster* 1500 OR; *Brabustar* 1595 OR; *Brabuster* 1610 RMS (VII, 343); *Brebuster* 1776 Mackenzie; [*'brebāstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 31).

8. *Brebister*, S, HU 375 934, Parish of Northmaven, Shetland.

*Brabustare* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Brabistour* 1602 CBS1; *Brabister* 1624 RMS (VIII, 612); *Brabuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Brabuster* 1672 Retours (O&S, 106); *Barbuster* c. 1734 van Keulen; [*'brebister*] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

9. *Breibister*, HU 216 496, Parish of Walls & Sandness, Shetland.

*Brabuster* (c. 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (appl. (ff.1v., 7v.)); *Brabuster* 1548-9 SheDoc2 (88); *Breibistir* 1573 SheDoc2 (203); *Brabister* 1576-7 SheDoc2 (235); *Brabister* 1577 RMS (IV, 2672); *Brabuster* 1597 SheDoc (264); *Braebister* 1600 SheDoc (301); *Brabister* 1601 SheDoc (307); *Brabister* 1605 SheDoc (397); *Brebustaw* 1610 SheDoc (503); *Brabuster* 1623 DOH (II, p. 5); *Brabista*, *Brabister* 1624 DOH (II, p. 28); *Brabusta* 1624 DOH (II, p. 29); *Brebuster* 1695 Retours (O&S, 155); *Breibister*, *Brebuster* 1716 ROZ (SA); [*'brebister*] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

10. *Prabost*, S, NG 422 498, Parish of Snizort, Skye, Inverness-shire.

The specific is ON *breiðr*, adj., 'broad, wide' (Forbes 1923, p. 89, 284; Jakobsen 1936, p. 29, Marwick 1952, pp. 6, 31, 76, 179; Stewart 1987, p. 55; Waugh 1985, pp. 289-90).

No. 2 only exists as part of a formally secondary name, *Brabsterdorran*, whose generic element, *Brabster*, is of the same origin as the rest of the names listed here. The final element in *Brabsterdorran* seems to be a distinguishing or reciprocating element, most likely applied to single this name out from the nearby *Brabster* in Canisbay. It does have a few forms as an independent unit but whether they are genuine or just short forms is unknown.

Despite different linguistic situations, the pronunciation of the specific of the various names have all developed in remarkably similar ways. ON [-ei-] has become Cai., Ork, Shetl., & Skye dial. [-e-] (Jakobsen 1928, p. L; Marwick 1995, p. 33). Only the pronunciation of no. 3 has developed slightly differently from ON [-ei-] to Ork. [-ai-] (Marwick 1995, p. 33), which is also a typical development. There are no vestiges of the original [-ð-], as it is usually dropped (Jakobsen 1928, p. LI; Marwick 1995, pp. 34-5). The unstressed inflectional ending has also been dropped. The initial [p-] of no. 10 for original [b-] is a result of unvoicing of initial [b-] in the local Skye Gaelic dialect (Borgström 1941, § 45, p. 33).

**BRABUSTIR** see s.n. **BRABSTER**

**BRAVOST, BROUBSTER**

1. Bravost, Kirk Christ Lezayre, Isle of Man.

2. Broubster, S, ND 031 602, Parish of Reay, Caithness.

[*Broubustardail* 1543 RMS (III, 2884)]; *Browbster* 1562 Sinclair (Mey); [*Browbisterdail* 1577 RSS (VII, 988)]; [*Browbusterdail* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038)]; *Broubuster* 1662 Blaeu; *Brownbuster* 1750 Dorret; *Brubster* 1832 Thomson; [*'brubstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 66).

The specific is ON *brú*, f., 'a bridge', probably in the genitive sg. in the case of no. 1. (Marstrander 1932, p. 243; Waugh 1985, p. 66; Broderick 1997, p. 313). According to Marstrander, the specific developed phonetically in the following way: ON *brúa(r)*- > ION *brá(r)*-. The generic of no. 1. seems to have developed similarly to *bólstaðr* in the Outer Hebrides, albeit with an additional change of ON [b] to [v].

**BREABOST** see s.n. **BRABSTER**

**BREABOST** see s.n. **BRABSTER**

**BREBISTER** see s.n. **BRABSTER**

**BRETABISTER, BRETTABISTER**

1. Bretabister, S, HU 438 721, Delting Parish, Shetland.

[*'bretabɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

2. Brettabister, S, HU 483 575, Parish of Nesting, Shetland.

*Bratabuster* (c. 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (appl. (ff.3r., 7r.)); *Brattabustar* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Brattabister* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Bratabuster*, *Bratbuistr* 1716 ROZ (SA); [*'bretabɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 56).

The specific is ON *brattr*, adj., 'steep' (cf. Stewart 1987, pp. 55, 56).

According to Jakobsen (1928, p. XLIV), ON [a] does not usually become [e] in Shetland. Nevertheless, the change seems to occur with ON *brattr*. Both no. 1 and no. 2 are pronounced [*breta-*]. It is possible that the present stem vowel sound is the result of analogy with names originating from ON *breiðr*.

**BREBUSTER** see s.n. **BRABSTER**

**BREIBISTER** see s.n. **BRABSTER**



**BRETABISTER** see s.n. **BREBISTER**

**BRETTABISTER** see s.n. **BREBISTER**

**BROUBSTER** see s.n. **BRAVOST**

**BYLBSTER** see s.n. **BILBSTER**

### **CALBOST**

Calbost, S, NB 414 175, Lochs Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

*Calbost* 1821 Johnson; *Callbost* 1832 Thomson; *Calabost* 1886 Admiralty.

The specific is probably ON *kaldr*, adj., 'cold' (cf. Capt. Thomas 1876, p. 479; Watson 1904, p. 265), as ON *[ld]* is often assimilated to *[ll]* (Seip 1955, pp. 170, 283). Watson also suggests the ON personal name *Kali*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 673-4), probably with an eye on the Gaelic pronunciation of the name [*kaɫabɔst*] (Duncan c. 1930). However, the present medial vowel is most likely only a svarabhakti vowel and not an original morphological constituent (Borgstrøm 1940, § 298, pp. 213-4).

### **CAMSTER**

1. Camster, S, ND 209 608, Parish of Bower, Caithness.

*Campster* 1592 RMS (V, 2180); *Cambuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Camster* 1609 RMS (VII, 129); *Cambuster* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Cambuster* 1671 Retours (Cai., 28); *Campster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Camster* 1832 Thomson.

2. Camster, ND 253 455, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Camstir* 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Cambuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Cambustar* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Camstair* 1568 RSS (VI, 102); *Campistar* 1578 Sinclair (Mey); *Cambuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Cambuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Cambuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Cambuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Campster* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Cambustar* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Kempster* 1755 Roy (38-1); *Kempster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Camster* 1832 Thomson; *Cempster* 1655 Sinclair (Mey); [*kamstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 381).

The specific is ON *kambr*, m., 'a ridge on a hill'. (cf. Waugh 1985, p. 381).

### **CARBOST, CARRABUS**

1. Carbost, S, NG 376 319, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire.

*Carabost* 1886 Admiralty.

2. Carboist, S, NG 427 482, Parish of Snizort, Skye, Inverness-shire. *Caraboist* 1596 RMS (VI, 453); *Caraboist* 1610 RMS (VII, 298); *Caraboist* 1637 RMS (IX, 654); *Carobost* 1688 Retours (Inv., 109); *Carbost* 1832 Thomson.

3. Carrabus, S, NR 314 639, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Carrapols* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Carrapols* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Carapelles* ? 1662 Retours (Arg., 68); *Carropols* 1665 RMS (XI, 778); *Carabus* 1751 McDougall; *Carabus* 1776 Mackenzie; *Carabus* 1804 Heather.

The specific is ON *kjarr*, n., 'brushwood, fen or marsh' (cf. Capt. Thomas 1882, p. 256; Gillies 1906, p. 225; Forbes 1923, p. 102; Maceacharna 1976, p. 85). The medial [a] is most likely a svarabhakti vowel (cf. the principle in Borgstrøm 1940, §§ 297-8, pp. 211-4).

## **CARRABUS see s.n. CARBOST**

### **\*CHALISBOST**

\*Chalisbost, R, NG 229 941, Parish of Strath, Skye, Inverness-shire.

This name does not exist as an independent place-name today, but is found as the specific of the topographical name *Meall Chalisbost*, where *Chalisbost* is the specific element and Gaelic *meall*, m., 'a lump, a knob', is the generic element and refers to a hill. The origin of the element *Chalisbost* is not entirely certain, having been heavily Gaelicised. With no written sources to rely on, no interpretation of the specific can be offered.

### **\*CHOLLAPUS, COILLABUS, COULLABUS**

1. \*Chollapus, A, NR 357 678, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Culabolls* 1751 McDougall.

2. Coillabus, S, NR 316 438, Parish of Kildalton & Oa, Islay, Argyllshire.

3. Coullabus NR 298 657, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

The lack of early forms makes the interpretation of these names difficult. The specific might be ON *kúla*, f., 'an elevation, whatever rises out of or from an otherwise level surface' (Maceacharna 1976, p. 85). Gillies (1906, p. 225) interpreted the specifics of nos 1 and 2 as either ON *kolla*, f., 'a hind, a horn-less hoofed animal', or ON *kollr*, m., 'a round topped hill', but the only source reference, the 1751 reference, would not immediately suggest any of these latter suggestions.

The name of no. 1 is no longer in use as an independent formation, but survives in the formally secondary *Dun Chollapus*. However, it does feature as a formally primary place-name on the McDougall map of 1751.

### CLAWBOST

Clawbost †, S, NB 283 205, Lochs Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

This name is only recorded by Duncan (c. 1930). He writes: "Clawbost [kla:bɔst] former name of Balallan Village, from John McIvar, Laxay – who heard it related once (at Balallan, Lochs), and directly from Donald McLeod (old man), Habost, Lochs." The specific is somewhat obscure and not readily interpretable. The generic is definitely ON *bólstaðr*, m., though.

### COILLABUS see s.n. \*CHOLLAPUS

### COLBOST

1. Colbost, S, NG 212 494, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire. *Colbust* 1804 Heather; *Colbost* 1832 Thomson.

2. Colbost, S, NG 317 404, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire. *Colbost* 1832 Thomson.

The lack of early records makes these names hard to interpret. Forbes (1923, p. 99) interpreted the specific as ON *kaldr*, adj., 'cold'. However, ON [a] does not usually appear to change to [o]. Alternatively, ON *kollr*, m., 'a rounded top', should be considered, as this appellative seems altogether more compatible with the appearance of these names.

### CORNABUS

Cornabus, S, NR 334 464, Parish of Kildalton & Oa, Islay, Argyllshire. *Cornubus* 1408 ALI (p. 22, no. 16); *Cornobolsay* 1562 OPS (p. 271); *Cornepollis* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Cornepollis* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Cornepolis* 1662 Retours (Arg., 68); *Cornepolis* 1665 RMS (XI, 778).

The specific is ON *korn*, n., 'grain, grain crop'. The medial vowel /-a-/, /-o-/, /-u-/ or /-e-/ is a svarabhakti vowel (cf. the principle in Borgstrøm 1940, §298, pp. 213-4).

### COUBISTER

1. Coubister, S, HY 373 154; Firth Parish, Orkney. *Cowbistar* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Cowbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); [ku-bəstər] 1952 Marwick (p. 115).

2. Coubister, S, HY 30 05, Parish of Orphir, Orkney.  
*Cowbustir* 1492 HSR0 (p. 42); *Cowbuster* 1603 DOH (I, p. 226);  
*Cowbuster* 1610 DOH (I, p. 238); *Howbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119);  
*Cowbister* 1661 Retours (O&S, 91); *Cowbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4);  
*Cubister* 1776 Mackenzie; [*kubəstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 104).

The specific of these two names has been interpreted as an ON personal name *Kúgi*, m. (cf. Lind, 1905-15, col. 722), or as *kúa*, the gen. pl. of ON *kyr*, f., 'a cow' (Marwick 1952, pp. 104 & 115). Although *Kúgi* is recorded as the name of an Orcadian farmer, it is, nonetheless, an extremely rare personal name. Therefore, I find Marwick's latter suggestion altogether more probable.

The 1614 and 1656 entries of no. 2 seem to suggest an origin in ON *haugr*, 'a mound, a hill', but these forms are mistaken or misspelt as Marwick's phonetic renderings are the same in both cases.

ON [-u:-] has been reduced in quantity (Marwick 1995, p. 32), probably because of its situation in a trisyllabic structure. The gen. pl. inflection [-a] appears to have been dropped, in spite of the fact that it is often preserved in place-names in Orkney (Marwick 1995, p. 23).

## COULLABUS see s.n. \*CHOLLAPUS

## CRAGABUS

Cragabus, S, NR 325 450, Parish of Kildalton & Oa, Islay, Argyllshire.  
*Cracobus* 1408 ALI (p. 22, no. 16); *Craigabolsay* 1562 OPS (p. 271);  
*Kagabolsay* ? 1562 RSS (V, 1112); *Craigaboilsay* 1563 RSS (V, 1259);  
*Cragabolsa* 1584 RSS (VIII, 1743); *Cragapols*, *Gargapollis* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Cragapols*, *Gragapols* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Cragapolis* 1662 Retours (Arg., 68); *Gragapolis* 1665 RMS (XI, 778); *Cragabus* 1751 McDougall.

There are a couple of suggestions for this name. The specific could either be the ON personal name *Kraki*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 715-6), or ON *kráka*, f., 'a crow'. However, considering that *Kraki* is rare outside of Norway (only found twice in Iceland), the latter suggestion would appear to be the most likely.

## CROSBISTER, CROSSBISTER, CROSSBOST

1. Crosbister, S, HP 581 039, Unst, Shetland.  
*Corbustanch* ? (c. 1513x1524) SheDoc2 (app. 3); *Crosbustare*, *Crosbustire* 1574-5 SheDoc2 (210); *Crocebustare* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Crosbuster* 1578-9 SheDoc2 (260); *Crosbustay* 1578-9 SheDoc2 (265); *Cros-*

*buster* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Crosbuster* 1599 SheDoc (280); *Croisbuster* 1603 SheDoc (360); *Crosbuster* 1604 SheDoc (383); *Crosbuster* 1624 DOH (II, p. 56); *Crosbister* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1049); *Crosbister* 1692 Retours (O&S, 142); *Crobister* 1695 Retours (O&S, 155); [*krɔsbəstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 54).

2. Crossbister, S, HU 607 920, Fetlar, Shetland.  
*Crocebustare* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Corsbuster* 1602 CBS1; [*krɔsbəstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

3. Crossbost, S, NB 393 245, Lochs Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.  
*Krossbost* 1662 Blaeu (131-2); *Crossbost* 1821 Johnson; *Crossbost* 1832 Thomson; [*krɔsəbɔst*] 1954 Oftedal (p. 399).

The specific is ON *kross*, m., 'a cross, a junction' (cf. Capt. Thomas 1876, p. 488; Stewart 1987, p. 54, p. 55). Oftedal (1954, p. 399) is of the opinion that the Lewis example (no. 3) is in the genitive plural as the [-ə] does not seem to be a svarabhakti vowel in this case. The 'cross' of the majority of the names is probably a standing cross rather than a road junction.

## **CROSSBISTER see s.n. CROSBISTER**

## **CROSSBOST see s.n. CROSBISTER**

## **EALLABUS**

1. Eallabus, S, NR 336 632, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Aelabols*, *Allabols* 1588 RMS (V, 1491); *Allabols* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Allabolss* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67); *Ellabols* 1662 Blaeu (121-3); *Alabus* 1751 McDougall.

2. \*Eallabus, S, NR 283 703, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

The specific is uncertain. Most of the sources suggest an origin in ON *al-* or *ál-*. As a cautious interpretation I would suggest ON *áll*, m., in the specialised meaning of 'a deep valley'. No. 1 is situated on a valley floor and no. 2 is situated on the banks of *Loch Gruinart*.

Although both names are borne by settlements in the same parish, these are sufficiently far removed from each other to suggest that they are probably not the same name. The settlements are some 15 km apart and they are also separated by *Loch Gruinart*. In order to single out the two settlements, no. 2 has acquired the affix, Gaelic *gàrradh*, m., 'an enclosure'.

## EASTBISTER

Eastbister, S, ND 319 898, Parish of Walls & Flotta, Orkney.

The specific is most likely ultimately from ON *austr*, adv., 'east', used in reciprocation with the nearby settlement of Wasbister, Walls & Flotta (see below). However, owing to the lack of documentary evidence, the origin might alternatively be Scots *east*, adv., 'east' + analogical *-bist(er)*.

## EASTERBISTER, ISBISTER

1. Easterbister, S, HY 473 017, Holm Parish, Orkney.

*Estirbistir* 1492 HSRO (p. 48); *Esterbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 49); *Eisterbuster* 1500 OR; *Estterbuster* 1552-3 REO (pp. 248-9); *Easterbuster* 1595 OR; *Eisterbister* 1612 OrkTes (no. 30); *Eisterbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Easterbuster* 1614 OrkTes (no. 128); *Eisterbister* 1641 Retours (O&S, 31); *Eisterbister* 1641 Retours (O&S, 32); *Easterbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

2. Isbister, S, HY 261 235, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney.

*Estbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 27); *Estbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 47); *Esterbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 30); *Esterbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 48); *Eisterbuster* 1500 OR; *Isbester* 1534 REO (p. 217); *Isbister* 1564 DOH (I, p. 154); *Ysbustir* 1566 REO (p. 285); *Ibister* 1566 RSS (V, 2554); *Isbister* 1568 DOH (I, p. 164); *Isbester* 1585-6 REO (p. 353); *Ysbustar*, *Ysbustar* 1595 OR; *Y[s]bister* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Isbuster* 1613 OrkTes (no. 99); *Ycebust* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Isbuster* 1675 Retours (O&S, 112); *Ysbuster* 1680 Retours (O&S, 125); *Isbuster* 1727 OR; *Isbuster* 1776 Mackenzie; [*aizbæstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 136).

3. Isbister, S, ND 465 847, Parish of South Ronaldsay, Orkney.

*Esterbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 37); *Ystabustare* 1500 OR; *Isbuster* 1595 OR; *Iysbuster* 1627 OR; *Isbuster* 1644 Retours (O&S, 45); *Isbuster* 1666 RMS (XI, 952); *Isbuster* 1670 Retours (O&S, 101); [*aizbæstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 172).

4. Isbister, S, ND 448 901, Parish of South Ronaldsay, Orkney.

5. Isbister, S, HU 407 669, Delting Parish, Shetland.

*Ellisbust* ? (c. 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (f. 4r.)); *Ylisbuster* ? 1589 SheDoc (151); *Ilebister* ? 1589 SheDoc (156); *Ysbuster* 1602 CBS1; *Isbuster* 1608 SheDoc (470); *Ibuster* 1642 RMS (IX,1230); [*aizbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

6. Isbister, S, HU 371 910, Parish of Northmaven, Shetland.

*Ellisbist* ? (c. 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (f. 2v.)); *Usbister* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Isebuster* 1581 BruSym (SA); *Isbuster* 1613 RegTes (SA); *Vsebuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Isbister* 1672 Retours (O&S, 106); *Isbister* 1878 OS1; [*aizbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

7. Isbister, S, HU 577 640, Whalsay, Whalsay & Skerries, Shetland. *Urbuster* (c. 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (f. 2r.)); *Isbister* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Isebuster* 1582 SheDoc (31); *Isbister* 1598 SheDoc (270); *Isbister* 1601 SheDoc (330); *Isbister* 1617 DOH (III, p. 5); *Isbister* 1630 RegTes (SA); *Ycebuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Ysebuster* c. 1734 van Keulen; [*aizbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 56).

The specific is the comparative adj., ON *eystri*, 'easterly', although the Shetland examples (nos 5-7) might alternatively derive from ON *ýztr*, superlative adj., 'outermost'. However, Shetland sources are generally rather late and when the Shetland *Isbisters* do appear in documents, they compare fully with the Orkney forms in nos 2 and 3, which clearly originate from ON *eystri*. A third interpretation has been forwarded by Stewart (1987, pp. 55-6), who suggests that the specific is ON *austr*, adv., 'east' for the Shetland examples (nos 5-7). However, this suggestion is not likely, as ON [*au*] does not become Shetl. [*ai*] (Jakobsen 1928, p. 1).

If the earliest sources clearly suggest a derivation from ON *eystri*, the pronunciation of nos 2-7 do not unequivocally suggest so. Modern Orkney [*ai*] can have developed from ON [*ey*] (Marwick 1952, p. 32), but such a development is not recorded by Jakobsen (he does not actually discuss ON [*ey*]). Instead, Jakobsen sees [*ai*] as a Scots influenced development from ON [*y:*], which may lend credit to an origin in ON *ýztr* (Jakobsen 1928, pp. LXIV-LXV). ON *ýztr* appears to gain extra credibility in as far as the consonant following the stem vowel is [-z-]. However, this [-z-] is not original. Owing to its unstressed position, original [-tri-] is lost shortly after 1500 (see e.g. nos 2-3), thus allowing the original [-s-] to change to [-z-] because of its position in voiced surroundings.

Why the present appearance of no. 1 is so radically different from the other place-names of the same origin is not entirely clear. It can be argued that with the loss of original [-tri-] the origin from ON *eystri* was no longer apparent. Therefore in the place-names which underwent this change *eystri* was not replaced by Scots *easter*, comp. adj., 'more easterly', as was the case with no. 1, which for some reason retained its ON [-tri-] cluster long enough for *eystri* to be replaced by its Scots cognate.

The (c. 1507x1513) source forms of nos 5 and 6, as well as the 1589 source forms of no. 5 are puzzling. They are most probably either scribal errors or possibly an attempt to render the last vestige of the consonant cluster. Especially the (c. 1507x1513) document contains a high number of misspellings and haphazardous renderings of place-names (cf. SheDoc2, pp. 251-55).

The specific of no. 1 is in reciprocation with *vestri* of the nearby farm of *Westerbister* (see below), whereas that of no. 4 reciprocates with *miðr* and *vestr* of *Midbister* and *Wasbister* (see below).

### EBOST

Ebost, S, NG 320 389, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire.  
*Eabost* 1832 Thomson.

According to Forbes (1923, p. 178), the specific is ON *eið*, n., 'an isthmus', but owing to the lack of early documentary evidence this is difficult to ascertain.

### ELLIBISTER

Ellibister, S, HY 396 211, Parish of Evie & Rendall, Orkney.  
*Ellibustar* 1503 REO (p. 417); *Alibustar* 1595 OR; *Allebuster* 1620 DOH (III, p. 105); *Ellibuster* 1655 Retours (O&S, 68); *Ellabuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Elebuster* 1727 OR; *Elibuster* 1776 Mackenzie; *Elibister* 1794 OR.

Marwick (1952, p. 120) believes that the specific is a personal name, but cannot say which. The personal names *Elli*, m., and *Ella*, f., are virtually unattested (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 20, 232), whereas ON *Alli*, m., is first and foremost an East Scandinavian name and rarely attested elsewhere (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 20; 1931, col. 19). An alternative interpretation might be the genitive sg. of ON *elfr*, f., 'river, stream'. A stream, the *Burn of Ellibister*, runs right past the settlement. However, this possibility is not very convincing in so far as *elfr* is not attested in place-names elsewhere in the Northern Isles. It does not seem to have been used there at all. Hence, the interpretation must remain open.

### EORABUS

Eorabus, S, NM 381 235, Parish of Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon, Mull, Argyllshire.

The specific of this name has been explained as ON *eyrr*, f., 'a bank of sand or gravel protruding out into water, especially at the mouth of a river' (cf. Capt. Thomas 1882, p. 256; Gillies 1906, p. 227; Forbes 1923, p. 186; Maceacharna 1976, p. 85). Although early documentary sources are lacking, this interpretation is fairly safe, as the most prominent topographical feature of the area is a large gravelly beach, called *Traigh Mhór* (= 'The large beach').

How ON [*ey-*] becomes Gaelic /eo-/, [*jo:-*], is not entirely clear, but it seems to be the general development of ON initial [*e-*] + vowel/semi-vowel (cf. Eorrabus, below).



## **EORRABUS, EVRABISTER, EVRIBUST, OVERABIST, OVERBIST**

1. Eorrabus, S, NR 359 649, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Eurobolsay* 1562 OPS (p. 266); *Eurobolsay* 1562 RSS (V, 1112); *Ewrobolsay* 1563 RSS (V, 1259); *Ewrabolse* 1584 RSS (VIII, 1743); *Orepols* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Orepols* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Oriepols* 1665 RMS (XI, 778); *Yorabus* 1751 McDougall.

2. Evrabister, S, HU 395 542, Weisdale, Parish of Tingwall, Shetland. *Overabusk* 1570 SheDoc2 (185); *Overbuster* 1575-6 SheDoc2 (221); *Overbustare*, *Overbuster* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *y Øffrebøster* 1597 SheDoc (256) *Overabusk* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Overabusk* 1600 RMS (VI, 1083); *Uverabuster* 1602 CBS1; *Everrabuster* 1605 SheDoc (395); *Owirbister* 1610 SheDoc (512); *Overabuster* 1623 DOH (II, p. 17); *Evrabister* 1716 ROZ (SA); [*ivrabister*] 1987 Stewart (p. 57).

3. Evribust, S, HY 391 321, Parish of Rousay, Orkney.

4. Overabist, S, HY 329 238, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney. *Evirbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 29); *Evirbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 47); *Evirbustar* 1500 OR; *Overbuster* 1595 OR; *Overbister* 1727 OR; *Overbister* 1794 OR.

5. Overbist, S, HY 690 403, Parish of Cross & Burness, Sanday, Orkney.

*in Everbuster* 1500 OR; *in Overbuster* 1601 OR; *Overbuster* 1618 DOH (III, p. 29); *Overbuster* 1620 DOH (III, p. 114); *Overbuster* 1670 Retours (O&S, 99); *Overbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

Although these five names have very different modern reflexes, they are of the same origin, namely ON comparative adj. *efri*, 'upper'.

The specific of the Islay example has previously been analysed as ON *eyrr*, f., 'a bank of sand or gravel protruding out into water, especially at the mouth of a river', because of a superficial similarity to *eora*, the modern Gaelic reflex of *eyrr* (cf. Capt. Thomas 1882, p. 256; Gillies 1906, p. 227; Forbes 1923, p. 186; Maceacharna 1976, p. 85). However, there are two major reasons why ON *eyrr*, f., cannot be the origin of this specific. Firstly, no such feature exists near the farm which this name refers to, and most probably there never has been one. The settlement is situated about 3.6 km from the sea. Most importantly, the earliest sources (the 1562, 1563 and 1584 entries) clearly indicate a different origin, namely one in ON *efri*, comp. adj., 'upper'.

It is difficult to establish whether the origin and age of no. 3 are the same as those of nos 1 & 2, owing to the lack of early documentary evidence. There is nothing which directly contradicts this, though. The 1595

forms onward of nos 4 & 5 are a replacement of Ork. *evir* by English/Scots *over*, 'above'.

Owing to the uncertain age and status of no. 2, it would be tempting to view it as an analogical formation in *bister*. However, there are a number of points which seem to point to it being genuine. It is mentioned very early (in 1576, see sources above).<sup>74</sup> The specific, *upper*, reciprocates with that of the neighbouring *Nedrabister* (< ON *undir*, adv., 'under, below', later Shetl. *nedra*, comparative adj., 'lower (of two), see below'). Together they seem to represent the result of an early splitting up of a large primary-farm unit. Their combined tax-value in 1716 was 36 merks, which is a very large farm for Shetland.<sup>75</sup> This seems to suggest that *Evrabister* and *Nedrabister* represent an original division of a primary settlement.

**EVABISTER see s.n. EORRABUS**

**EVABUST see s.n. EORRABUS**

### **FLADDABISTER**

Fladdabister, S, HU 435 325, Dunrossness Parish, Shetland.

*Flatbuster* (c. 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (f. 1v., 6r.)); *Flattabustare* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Flattabister* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Flattabister* 1601 SheDoc (331); *Floddabuster* 1602 CBS1; *Flottabister* 1604 CBS1; *Fladabister* 1623 DOH (II, p. 17); *Fladabuster* 1625 DOH (II, p. 68); *Fladebuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Flathabister*, *Flathabuster* 1716 ROZ

74. RSS. VII, 502/Ballantyne, John H. & Smith, B., *Shetland Documents 1195-1579*, (Lerwick, 1999), p. 170.

Holyroodhouse, 3 March 1575-6

Ane lettir maid ratifeand, apprevand and for oure soverane lord and his successouris perpetuallie confermand ane ... gift and dispositioun maid be Orne in Tokin and Torbarne in Sandwane [in Norway], with consent and assent of Anna and Cristina Peiris dochteris, thair spoussis, to the said Maister Robert and his airis perpetuallie, of all and hail the landis of *Overbuster* and *Unerbuster* guidis with thair pertinentis, liand within the parochin of Weisdell and schirefdome of Yetland, for payment of certane few malis and deweteis thairfoir, as at mair lenth is contenit in the said gift, of the dait the xxiiij day of October the yeir of God Jai Vc lxxij yeiris, [etc.]

SRO, PS.1/43, ff.70-1.

75. A typical high-status farm would typically be scatted at 18 merks. For instance, of the 32 *staðir*-farms in the 1716 rental 23 or 72% were of this value or more. Cf. Macgregor, Lindsay, 'Norse Naming Elements in Shetland and Faroe: A Comparative Study', in *Northern Studies* 23, (University of Edinburgh: 1986), p. 92.

(SA); *Fladabister* 1810 BruSym (SA); [*ʃladabɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 58).

The specific is ON *flatr*, adj., 'flat', a weak form of ON *flatr* (cf. Stewart 1987, p. 58).

### FLEBISTER

Flebister, HY 691 413, Lady, Parish of Sanday, Orkney.

This name is uncertain. The generic may either be ON *bólstaðr*, m., or possibly analogical *-bist(er)*. The specific is uncertain (cf. Lamb 1992, p. 28) as the lack of material does not make a qualified judgement possible.

### FOUBISTER

Foubister, S, HY 518 038, Parish of St. Andrews & Deerness, Orkney.

*Fowbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 46); *Fowbustare* 1500 OR; *Fubister* 1519 DOH (I, p. 63); *Foubistir*, *Fubistir* 1559 REO (p. 111); *Foubistar*, *Foubustar* 1595 OR; *Foubester* 1613 OrkTes (no. 100); *Foubister* 1620 DOH (III, p. 111); *Foubuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Sowbister* 1684 Retours (O&S, 134); *Fowbister*, *Sowbister* 1687 Retours (O&S, 138); [*ʃubəstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 83).

The specific is probably ON *full*, adj., 'stinking, rotten smelling' (cf. Marwick 1952, pp. 83-4). The specific probably refers to the shallow bay nearby which gives off a stench at ebb.

ON [-u-] has been reduced in quantity (Marwick 1995, p. 32) and [-ll] has been dropped in the consonant cluster [-llb-] (see also Marwick 1995 p. 36).

### FROBOST

Frobost, S, NF 740 253, South Uist, Inverness-shire.

*Froybost* 1498 RMS (II, 2437); *Froyboist* 1539 RSS (II, 2970); *Frowbast* 1563 RMS (IV, 1474); *Frobost* 1582 RSS (VIII, 783); *Froborst* 1662 Blaeu (129-30); *Frobost*, *North Frobost*, *South Frobost* 1805 Bald(2); *N. Frobost*, *S. Frobost* 1832 Thomson.

The specific may be the ON personal name *Fróði*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 289-91), although this cannot be ascertained.

### GARBOLSS, GARRABOST

1. Garbolss, S, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Garbolse* 1542 RMS (III, 2835); *Garbols* 1615 Retours (Arg., 16); *Garbollis* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Garbollis* 1630 RMS (VIII, 1610); *Garbolss* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67).

2. Garrabost, S, NB 514 333, Stornoway Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.  
*Karbost* 1662 Blaeu (131-2); *Garrabost* 1726 Macfarlane (II, 213);  
*Karbost* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Garbust* 1776 Mackenzie; *Garbust* 1804  
 Heather; *Garrabost* 1821 Johnson; *Garrabost* 1832 Thomson; *Garrabost*  
 1886 Admiralty; [*garəbɔsd*] c. 1930 Duncan; [*garəbɔst*] 1954 Oftedal (p.  
 396).

3. Garrabost, S, NL 705 999, Isle of Barra, Parish of Barra, Inverness-  
 shire.

*An Garrabost*, [*əŋgarapɔst*] 1999 Stahl (p. 119).

Judging from the Blaeu and van Keulen sources for no. 2, the specific  
 would seem to be ON *kjarr*, n., 'brushwood, fen or marsh'. However,  
 Blaeu's and van Keulen's forms are probably a misrepresentation of the  
 actual pronunciation, and should not be relied upon. All of the other  
 sources for the names show forms in *Gar-*, which is probably a reflex of  
 ON *garðr*, m., 'a farm, an enclosure' (cf. Forbes 1923, p. 195; Oftedal  
 1954, p. 396). No. 3 has, however, been interpreted as being ON *gerði*, n.,  
 'an enclosed field' (Stahl 1999, p. 119), although this possibility is not  
 supported by the phonetic transcription. Capt. Thomas (1876, pp. 479-80)  
 interpreted the specific as the ON personal name *Geirr*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-  
 15, cols 317-9), but this is also unlikely because there is no vestige of a  
 genitive marker (-s).

The situation of the settlement to which no. 1 refers is not known. The  
 last time the name figured in the sources was in 1662, hence the unusual  
 form by which it is represented here.

## GARRABOST see s.n. GARBOLSS

## GRIMBIST

Grimbist, S, HY 514 410, Parish of Westray, Orkney.

*Grannabustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 61); *Grambustar* 1500 OR; *Grenebustar*  
 1595 OR; *Grenebuster* 1610 RMS (VII, 343); *Greenbuster* 1662 Blaeu  
 (133-4).

The specific has been interpreted as ON *grænni*, adj., 'green' (cf.  
 Marwick 1952, p. 32). However, judging from the early forms the speci-  
 fic may rather be the genitive sg. of ON *grandi*, m., 'a sand dune, a sand  
 bank'. Near the farm is a short sandy beach on an otherwise rocky shore.  
 How the development from \**Grandi-* to *Grim-* has taken place is not  
 entirely clear. It appears that ON [-nd-] has been assimilated to [-nn-]  
 (Seip 1955, p. 167), which has subsequently been changed to [-m-], since  
 it is followed by a labial consonant (Marwick 1995, p. 36). The inflec-

tional ending has first been reduced to [-ə-] (witten /-e-/) and later lost, owing to its unstressed position. The stem vowel, ON [-a-], may have become [-i-]/[-e-] on analogy with Grimbister in Firth parish. Compare for instance Blaeu's 1662 forms, which are similar.

### GRIMBISTER

Grimbister, S, HY 372 127, Firth Parish, Orkney.

*Grymbustar* 1500 OR; *Grynbister* 1509 DOH (I, p. 252); *Grymbuster* 1560-1 REO (p. 264); *Grymbustar* 1595 OR; *Grymbister* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Grimbister* 1601 OR; *Grimbester* 1612 OrkTes (no. 71); *Grimbister* 1619 DOH (III, p. 74); *Grembister*, *Grimbister* 1627 OR; *Grumbuster* 1655 Retours (O&S, 69); *Grimbister* 1657 Retours (O&S, 84); *Greenbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Grimbister* 1680 Retours (O&S, 125); *Grimbister* 1687 Commis. Rec. (OLM 2, p. 173); *Grimbister* 1794 OR.

Marwick (1952, p. 115) suggest that the specific could be the genitive sg. of the ON personal name *Grímr*, m., or less likely ON *grænni*, adj., 'green', probably hinting at the surrounding vegetation. In spite of what Marwick says, the latter suggestion is the more plausible because the lack of a genitive marker in the written evidence renders the former suggestion unlikely.

Before a labial consonant, ON [n] (and [nn]) becomes [m] in Orkney (Marwick 1995, p. 36). The stem vowel, ON [ø:] has become Ork. [i:] (Marwick 1955, p. 33) and has probably subsequently been shortened, being in a trisyllabic compound.

### GROBISTER, GROBOLS, GROBUST, GROBUSTER

1. Grobister, S, HY 653 242, Parish of Stronsay, Orkney.

*Grobustar*, *Grobuster* 1595 OR; *Groabuster* 1620 DOH (III, p. 114); *Grobuster* 1630 Retours (O&S, 14); *Grobuster* 1639 Retours (O&S, 28); *Grobuster* 1654 Retours (O&S, 61); *Grouista* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Grobister* 1776 Mackenzie.

2. Grobols, S, NR 337 598, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Grobolsay* 1562 OPS (p. 266); *Grobolsay* 1562 RSS (V, 1112); *Grobolsay* 1563 RSS (V, 1259); *Grobolse* 1584 RSS (VIII, 1743); *Grobolls* 1751 McDougall.

3. Grobust, S, HY 428 495, Parish of Westray, Orkney.

4. Grobust<sup>†</sup>, S, HU 370 637, Delting Parish, Shetland.

*Grobuster* 1603 CBS1; *Grobussyd* ? 1666 RMS (XI, 932).

Marwick (1952, p. 24) and Maceacharna (1976, p. 81) interpret the specific of nos 1 and 2 as the ON personal name *Gróa*, f. (which was borne by a daughter of Thorstein the Red (cf. *Landnámabók*)). However, since there are several place-names of seemingly the same origin, it is altogether more probable that the specific should be ON *grár*, adj., 'grey' (cf. Stewart 1987, p. 56).

It is possible that *Grobuster*, Shetland, might be a misrepresentation for the neighbouring settlement of *Grobsness* since *Grobuster* is only mentioned twice in the sources. Alternatively, it is perhaps more likely that *Grobsness* itself is a secondary name, reflecting the now lost *Grobister* in its specific. Some of the older forms seem to suggest so: Grobbisnes 1578-9 (SheDoc2, 260).

**GROBOLS** see s.n. GROBISTER

**GROBUST** see s.n. GROBISTER

**GROBUSTER** see s.n. GROBISTER

### GROTPOLDO

Grotpoldo †, S, Island of Coll, Argyllshire.

*Crecepoldo* 1528 RMS (III, 712); *Grocepoldo* 1542 RMS (III, 2787); *Grotpoldo* 1617 RMS (VII, 1652); *Grotpoldo* 1642 Retours (Arg., 59); *Grotpoldo* 1643 RMS (IX, 1310); *Grotpoldo* 1656 RMS (X, 531); *Gortpoldo* 1674 Retours (Arg., 81).

The specific seems to be ON *grjót*, n., 'gravel'. The generic may be ON *bólstaðr*, m., but this reflex is relatively rare, so the origin of the generic is perhaps rather ON *ból*, n. (however, see *Arnabost*, above). This name is no longer in use and the exact location of the settlement to which it referred is not known.

### GUIDEBEST

Guidebest, S, ND 183 352, Parish of Latheron, Caithness.

*Gyodanister* ? 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Guidabest* 1832 Thomson.

The 1661 form cannot be correct and the 1832 form is so late that it is impossible to make out the origin of this name. Hence, the specific cannot be determined. The generic might possibly originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m., but even that is doubtful.

## HABOST

1. Habost, S, NB 522 632, Ness, Parish of Barvas, Lewis, Ross-shire. *Habust* 1776 Mackenzie; *Habost* 1821 Johnson; *Habost* 1832 Thomson; [ʔa:bɔst] (nom.)/[ʔa:bɔst] (gen.) 1954 Oftedal (p. 372).

2. Habost, S, NB 330 195, Lochs Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire. *Habost* 1662 Blaeu (131-2); *Tabost* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Habost* 1821 Johnson; *Habost* 1832 Thomson; [ʔa:bɔst] 1954 Oftedal (p. 402).

Capt. Thomas (1876, p. 480) analysed the specific as ON *hallr*, m., 'a slope, a sloping hill', but this interpretation does not fit with the present long stem vowel. Instead, the specific can hardly be anything but ON *hár*, adj., 'high' (cf. Oftedal 1954, pp. 372, 402). In the case of no. 1 it is probably as compared with the location of the neighbouring *Swanibost*.

ON [h] has been changed to Gaelic [t] in certain circumstances, according to normal phonetic developments (Oftedal 1954, pp. 372-3).

## HASTER

Haster, S, ND 327 505, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Housbustyr* 1519 Sutherland (Forse); *Hastbuster* 1531 RSS (II, 1009); *Hasbister* 1537 Sinclair (Mey); *Hisbestir* ? 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Hawsbuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Hasbuster* 1550 RSS (IV, 881); *Hasbuster* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Hesbuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Hasbuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Hasbuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Hasbuster* 1614 Retours (Cai., 8); *Haisbistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Hasbuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Haster* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Halbuster* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Halbuster*, *Hasbuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Haster* 1755 Roy (38-1); *Hauster* 1798 BV; *Haster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Haster* 1832 Thomson; [ʔastər] 1985 Waugh (p. 390).

Waugh (1985, pp. 190-1) has interpreted the specific as ON *hals*, m., 'a neck' or 'a ridge of land which divides two valleys or firths'. The usual development of ON [ls] is to [s] (Watson 1904, p. LIX), so this suggestion seems plausible. The specific cannot originate from ON *hús*, n., in spite of the fact that the 1519 form seems to suggest so, as ON [u:] does not become Cai. [a] (Waugh 1985, Appendix).

## HEGLIBISTER

Heglibister, S, HU 389 517, Weisdale, Parish of Tingwall, Shetland.

*Halbabuster*, *Hallebust* (c. 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (f. 3v.)); *Hellia-bustar*, *Helliabuster* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Hallibuster* 1580 SheDoc2 (185); *Halbuster* 1587 RMS (V, 1314); *Halibuster* 1587 SheDoc (99); *Halyebuster* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Halybuster* 1600 RMS (VI, 1083);

*Helliabuster*, *Hellibuster* 1613 RegTes (SA); *Heglibister* 1878 OS1; [*hegləbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 57).

Jakobsen (1936, p. 27) has suggested that the specific could be the gen. sg. of the ON personal name *Helgi*, m. Judging from the present-day pronunciation this suggestion would seem likely, as the present [-gl-] could be a metathesis of original [l] and [g]. However, this pronunciation is probably spelling-based, as there is nothing in the earliest recorded forms to suggest the presence of a [g]. Instead, the many forms in e.g. /-lia-/ and /-lye-/ rather seem to represent a palatalisation of ON [ll] to Shetl. [lj] which is commonly palatalised in Shetland (Jakobsen, 1928, p. LVII). In view of this, Jakobsen's interpretation seems unlikely. Alternative suggestions have been brought forward by Stewart (1987, p. 57) who suggests that the specific may either be ON *halli*, adj. (the weak declension form of ON *hallr*, adj.), 'sloping, slanting' or the genitive pl. of ON *hallr*, m., 'a stone'. However, since ON [a] does not normally become [e], these suggestions do not appear to be likely either. Judging from the earliest reliable source form, the 1577 form, ON *hella*, f., 'a flat stone or rock' would seem to be the better suggestion altogether.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, ON *hella* would also account for the apparent palatalisation of ON [ll] and the [e] in the modern pronunciation.

### \*HEILLIBOST

\*Heillibost, R, NF 73 22, South Uist, Inverness-shire.

The origin of this name is difficult to ascertain. It would be tempting to analyse the specific as ON *heilagr*, adj., 'holy', but owing to the lack of early records this is impossible to ascertain. Another suggestion might be ON *hella*, f., 'a flat stone or rock' (cf. also *Heglibister*, above).

*Heillibost* is not indicated as a settlement on the OS 1:25,000 map. Instead, it refers to a stretch of sloping machair as *Liana Heillibost*. There is a small ruin on this stretch of machair at NF 733 224 which could be the original settlement.

### HENSBISTER

Hensbister, S, HY 47 04; Holm Parish, Orkney.

*Hensbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 49); *Hensbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 50); *Hensbistare* 1500 OR; *Hennisbuster* 1587 REO (p. 310); *Hensbustar* 1595

76. The source forms of place-names of the (c. 1507x1513) document are often misspelt. This is clearly also the case with the form *Halbabuster* for *Heglibister*, cf. SheDoc2, pp. 251-55.



OR; *Hensbuster* 1612 OrkTes (no. 82); *Hensbuster-beeist-the-gait*, *Hensbuster-bewest* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Hewbuster* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2244); *Henbuster*, *Hensbuster* 1641 Retours (O&S, 31); *Henbuster* 1643 Retours (O&S, 36); *Hensbuster* 1657 RMS (X, 593); *Hensbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

The specific is the genitive sg. of the ON personal name *Heðinn*, m. (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 93 and Lind 1905-15, cols 499-502; 1931, cols 430-1).

Being situated between vowels, ON [-ð-] has been dropped (Marwick 1995, pp. 34-5). This is a normal development, also in Norwegian place-names. Compare e.g. such names as *Hensrud* (NG IV/2, p. 121); *Hensrud* (NG V, p. 124), and *Hensvolden* 8NG IV/2, p. 59), etc.

### HERIBOST, HERIBUSTA

1. Heribost, S, NG 276 454, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire.
  2. Heribusta, S, NG 400 710, Parish of Snizort, Skye, Inverness-shire.
- Tarrabost* 1630 Retours (Inv., 50); *Herbusta* 1832 Thomson; [*herəbasta*] 1994 Cox (p. 50).

Forbes (1923, p. 214) analysed the specific as ON *herri*, m., 'a lord, a master'. Judging from the phonetic transcription a more likely possibility is ON *hærri*, 'higher', the comp. adj. of ON *hár*, adj., 'high'. Although Cox (1994, p. 50) has argued that the generic of no. 2 derives from ON *bústaðr*, the 1630 form clearly shows its *bólstaðr* origin.

The 1630 form features the regular sound change in which ON initial [h] becomes Gaelic [t] under certain circumstances (Ofstedal 1954, pp. 372-3).

### HERIBUSTA see s.n. HERIBOST

### HINDEBOLLIS

Hindebollis †, S, Island of Tiree, Argyllshire.

*Hindebollis* 1495 RMS (II, 2264); *Hurnepolff* (here?) 1674 Retours (Arg., 82).

Owing to the poor representation of this place-name in the written sources, a satisfactory interpretation is impossible. On the basis of the 1495 entry, the specific would seem to be ON *hind*, f., 'a hind', but the latter entry is not reconcilable with this interpretation. With the only two existing sources pointing in different directions, an interpretation cannot be ascertained.

The name is no longer in use.

## HOBBISTER, \*HOWBUSTIR

1. Hobbister, S, HY 650 407, Parish of Cross & Burness, Sanday, Orkney.

*Halfynscoffis alias Hobsta* 1500 OR; *Hobsta* 1502 REO (p. 419); *Houbustar* 1595 OR; *Howbister* 1615 OrkTes (no. 167); *Cowbuster*, *Howbuster* 1656 Retours (O&S, 78); *Houbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Hobister* 1776 Mackenzie.

2. Hobbister, S, HY 387 072, Parish of Orphir, Orkney.

*Howbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 39); *Howbustirland* 1500 OR; *Houbister* 1595 OR; *Hobuster* 1597 REO (p. 322); *Howbister* 1612 OrkTes (no. 52); *Howbister* 1614 OR; *Howbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Overhoubister* 1620 DOH (III, p. 85); *Howbister* 1642 OR; *Howbuster*, *Nethir et Ovir Houbusteris* 1643 Retours (O&S, 36); *Houbuster*, *Howbuster* 1657 Retours (O&S, 87); *Hobbister* 1739 OR ; *Hobuster* 1776 Mackenzie; [*hɔbɔstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 105).

3. Hobbister, S, HY 328 127, Stenness Parish, Orkney.

*Hobister*, *Howbester* 1566 RMS (IV, 1710); *Howbister* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Howbuster* 1610 Retours (O&S, 3); *Howbuster* 1613 DOH (I, p. 278); *Howbister* 1615 RMS (VII, 1345); *Howbuster* 1647 Retours (O&S, 51); *Howbuster* 1654 Retours (O&S, 62); *Howbister* 1696 Retours (O&S, 144).

4. \*Howbustir †, (S), Parish of Stromness, Orkney.

*Howbustir land* 1492 HSRO (p. 70).

The specific is ON *haugr*, m., 'a mound' (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 105; 112; Lamb 1992, p. 34). Marwick (1952, p. 10) suggests that the specific of no. 1 is the genitive sg. of ON *hóp*, n., 'a small bay', because of its location near a small rounded bay. However, this suggestion is unlikely as there is no vestige of a genitive marker (-s) in any of the forms. Alternatively, it might possibly be the stem form of ON *hóp*. However, the 1595 and 1662 forms are comparable with those of nos 2 and 3, so Marwick's alternative suggestion does not seem likely.

No. 4 appears to have formed part of a formally secondary name, *Howbustirland*, the generic of which is Ork./Scots *land*, sb., 'land, fields of a farm as opposed to the buildings'<sup>77</sup>. The specific is a place-name, a now lost *Howbustir* of the same origin as the other place-names here.

The phonetic development has been as follows: 1: ON [-au-] > Ork.

77. Robinson, Mairi (ed.), *Chambers. The concise Scots dictionary*, (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 355.

[-ɔ-] (Marwick 1995, pp. 33-4 & 90); 2: ON [-g-] has been dropped because of its position in a compound (Marwick 1995, p. 35).

The settlement of no. 3 is now split up into *Upper* and *Nether Hobbister*. No. 1 is called *Quoylealand* today (Lamb 1992, p. 34).

## HORGABOST

Horgabost, S, NG 048 965, Isle of Harris, Inverness-shire.

*Horgabot* 1805 Bald(1); *Hagabost* 1832 Thomson; [ˈtɔrɔgəbɔst] c. 1930 Duncan.

There have been various suggestions as to the origin of the specific of this place-name. The most excentric is probably Maciver's suggestion: ON *torg*, n., 'a square, a market place'. Maciver (1934, p. 50) draws his conclusion on the assumption that the initial /H-/ in Horga- is an original, Gaelic influenced, aspirated [t-], but in fact it is the other way round. There is general agreement that the initial [t-], found in many Lewis and Harris place-names of Norse origin, represents an original ON [h-] which has been "replaced by [t-] where Gaelic morphophonemics require a non-lenited (radical) initial".<sup>78</sup> Capt. Thomas (1876, p. 480) suggested ON *haugr*, m., 'a mound, a hill', because "On this farm is a fine cromleach, figured in the 'Crania Britannica' ... ". A *cromleach*, or *cròmleac* is an ancient standing stone. This standing stone must in some way be related to the chambered cairn on the lands of *Horgabost*, called *Coire na Feinne*. Capt. Thomas is probably right that the specific refers to this mound on the farm, only *haugr*, m., is not the correct etymology. Instead, I think the specific should rather be seen as originating from ON *hørgr*, m., 'a stone-heap, a heap of gathered stones' (cf. Macbain c. 1930 p. 21).

## HOUSABISTER, HUSABOST

1. Housabister, S, HU 491 581, Parish of Nesting, Shetland.

*Houssabuster* 1560 SheDoc2 (119); *Hawsabuster* 1561 SheDoc2 (131); *Howsabister* 1563 RSS (V, 1419); *Houssabustar*, *Hussabuster* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Hussabuster* 1605 Retours (O&S, 1); *Hussabuster* 1605 SheDoc (408); *Hassabuster* 1607 SheDoc (436); *Hussabusetter* 1607 Retours (O&S, 2); *Husabuster* 1608 SheDoc (467); *Housabuster* 1624 DOH (II, p. 46); *Housbister* 1625 RegTes (SA); [ˈhusabɪstər] 1987 Stewart (p. 56).

78. Cf. Oftedal, Magne, 'The Village Names of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides', in *Norsk tidsskrift for sprogvidenskap*, vol. xvii, (Oslo, 1954), p. 372.

2. Husabost, S, NG 202 515, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire.

*Husabost* 1832 Thomson.

3. Husabost †, S, NF 77 62, North Uist, Inverness-shire.

*Husaboste* 1389 ALI (p. 13, no. 10).

4. Husabost †, S, NL 56 81, Mingulay, Parish of Barra, Inverness-shire.

*Abhainn Husabost*, [au-in 'husabost] 1999 Stahl (p. 102).

The specific is ON *hús*, n., 'a house' (cf. Capt. Thomas 1876, p. 490; Forbes 1923, p. 217; Macbain c. 1930 p. 22; Fraser, 1973, p. 155; Stewart 1987, p. 56), probably in the genitive pl., although the [-a-] may be a connecting vowel (Jakobsen 1928, p. LVIII; Borgstrøm 1940, § 298, pp. 213-4).

The settlements to which no. 3 and no. 4 refer are now lost, the former because of serious coastal erosion in the area (Fraser 1973, p. 155). No. 3 is only reflected in the names *Abhainn Husabost* and *Sgeirr Husabost*. Both of these names refer to topographical features – the former a stream or river, the latter a skerry. By coincidence, *Abhainn Husabost* is also the form of the formally secondary name in which No. 4 is recorded (cf. Stahl 1999, p. 102).

**\*HOWBUSTIR see s.n. HOBBISTER**

## HUMSTER

Humster, S, ND 350 486, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Humbister* 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Hempster* ? 1724 Macfarlane (I, 157);

*Humster* 1798 BV; [ˈhamstər] 1985 Waugh (p. 393).

The specific might be the genitive sg. of the ON personal name *Hundi*, m. (cf. Waugh 1985, p. 393). However, *Hundi*, m., is a rare personal name in ON, being borne only by Scandinavians of a Scottish background. For instance, one of the sons of Earl Sigurðr Hlǫðversson († 1014) is called *Hvelpr*, m., or *Hundi*, m., both ultimately translations of Gaelic bynames – namely *Cuilean* (< Gael. *cuilean*, m., 'a whelp, a cub') and *Madadh* (< Gael. *madadh*, m., 'a dog').<sup>79</sup> *Hundi*, m., is otherwise used very sparsely as a personal name (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 598) and must be regarded as unlikely as a specific here. Instead, I find it is altogether more plausible that the specific is ON *hundr*, m., 'a dog'.

79. Cf. MacLennan, Malcolm, *A Pronouncing and Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language. Gaelic-English – English-Gaelic*, (Edinburgh, 1995), pp. 112, 218.

### \*HUNABOST

\*Hunabost, R, NG 412 506, Parish of Snizort, Skye, Inverness-shire.

This name is no longer found as an independent name, only as part of a formally secondary name, *Lòn Hunabost*, of which the generic element is Gaelic *lòn*, f., meaning 'a dub, a marsh, a pond'. *Hunabost* itself is somewhat uncertain. Its specific element cannot, owing to the lack of written forms, be ascertained (it could be any word in ON *hun-* or *hún-*). The generic is most probably ON *bólstaðr*, m., though.

### HUSABOST see s.n. HOUSABISTER

### INBUSTER

Inbuster †, S, Cross, Parish of Sanday, Orkney.

Lamb (1992, p. 36) has interpreted the specific as being uncertain but possibly ON *inn*, adv., 'in, inside'. However, owing to the lack of documentary evidence, Lamb's suggestion can neither be proved nor disproved. The generic may originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m., at least ultimately. The settlement is now lost.

### \*INGABISTER, INGIMSTER

1. \*Ingabister, S, HY 51 01, Holm Parish, Orkney.

*Quoyingybister* 1500 OR; *Quoyingybister* 1595 OR; *Quoy-inbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Quoy-ingabuster* 1616 RMS (VII, 1389); *Quoy Ingubster* 1657 RMS (X, 593).

2. Ingimster, S, ND 297 535, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Ingimster* 1841 Census; *Ingster* 1876 OS1; [ʔɪŋɪmstər] 1985 Waugh (p. 393).

The specific of no. 2 has been interpreted as the ON personal name *Ingi*, m. (cf. Waugh 1985, pp. 393-4 & Lind 1905-15, cols 624-5), and it might also formally be the source of the specific of no. 1. However, the problem with this personal name is that it is only attested late and sparsely. A more likely possibility could be ON *engi*, n., 'a meadow', especially when considering that ON [e] may become Cai. [ɪ] (Waugh 1985, Appendix).

The present [-m-] pronunciation of no. 2 is probably influenced by the nasal quality of the preceding [ŋ] (< ON [ng]).

No. 1 no longer exists as an independent place-name. It forms part of the formally secondary formation, *Quoyingabister*, which is a straightforward late Ork. *quoy*-name. Many Orkney-names in *quoy* show a strong

Scots/Scots Gaelic influence, in so far as their word-order is inverted compared to normal Germanic word order. This means that the generic is the first element of the name – in this case Ork. *quoy*, sb., ‘a small farmstead, an enclosure’ (< ON *kví*, f., ‘an enclosure’). The specific element is almost without doubt a now lost place-name, \**Ingabister*.

**INGABISTER** see s.n. **INGIMSTER**

**ISBISTER**

Isbister, S, HY 395 188, Parish of Evie & Rendall, Orkney.

*Ossbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 79); *Osbustare* 1500 OR; *Osbuster* 1595 OR; *Isbister* 1726 Macfarlane (I, 148); *Isbuster* 1776 Mackenzie; *Isbuster* 1794 OR; [*aizbəstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 120).

The specific is ON *óss*, m., ‘a confluence of a river or stream’. The reference is probably to the now partly landlocked *Oyce of Isbister* nearby (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 120).

The modern pronunciation is a result of analogy with the three other *Isbister* names in Orkney (see s.n. *Easterbister*, above).

**ISBISTER** see also s.n. **EASTERBISTER**

**KEBISTER**

Kebister, S, HU 471 469, Tingwall, Parish of Tingwall, Shetland.

*Kebustar* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Kebuster* 1580 SheDoc2 (185); *Kebuster* 1587 RMS (V, 1314); *Kebuster* 1587 SheDoc (99); *Kebuster* 1595 SheDoc (242); *Kabuster* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Kebuster* 1600 RMS (VI, 1083); *Kebeista* 1608 SheDoc (444); [*Ness of Kebusta*, 1615 CBS2]; *Kebusta* 1692 Retours (O&S, 142) [*Kibesters Point* 1781 Preston]; [*kebister*] 1987 Stewart (p. 57).

Stewart (1987, pp. 57-8) suggests that the specific is ON *kaup*, n., ‘a buy, a barter’ either with reference to bought land or to trade with ships entering Dales Voe. Brian Smith (‘Kebister – a short history, *Shetland Life*, no. 135, Jan. 1992, pp. 38-43), on the other hand, has interpreted the specific as ON *keipr*, m., ‘an angle-shaped oar-rest’, or more likely as a hill-name, \**Keipr*, m., derived from the said appellative. The hill which is referred to is a strangely shaped formation, standing out prominently in the landscape behind *Kebister*. It is now called *Luggie’s Knowe* but it was earlier known as *Da Kebb*.

### **\*KEEPSTER**

\*Keepster, S, ND 168 515, Parish of Watten, Caithness.

*Achkeepster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Achateepster* 1832 Thomson.

This name has not been attested as an independent formation. It is, however, found in the formally secondary *Achkeepster*, which is a compound consisting of the generic, Gaelic *achadh*, m., 'a field', and the specific, most likely a place-name, \**Keepster*. \**Keepster* may possibly contain ON *bólstaðr*, m. (cp. other Caithness *bólstaðr*-names in *-pster* and *-bster*, such as *Stroupster*, *Ulbster*, *Bilbster*, etc.). The lack of early documentary evidence makes the interpretation of the specific difficult (it may be any ON word in *ke-*). *Achkeepster* is typical of names indicating late shieling expansion into the interior of Caithness. Major farms (some of which are from ON *bólstaðr*) are usually the specific constituent of such names (see e.g. footnotes for *Lybster* and *Scrabster*, below).

### **KELDABISTER**

Keldabister, S, HU 492 423, Bressay, Shetland.

*Kellebust* (c 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (f. 4v.)); *Keldibuster* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Keldabister* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Keldabuster* 1592-3 SheDoc (207); *Kildabuster* 1610 RMS (VII, 313); [*kɪldibɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 58).

The specific is ON *kelda*, f., 'a spring' (cf. Stewart 1987, p. 58).

### **KEPOLLS**

Kepolls, S, NR 383 661, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Capolse* 1494 RMS (II, 2216); *Kepolse* 1542 RMS (III, 2835); [*Keappolsaybeg*, *Keappolsaymore* 1562 OPS (p. 266)]; [*Keapolsay-beg*, *Keapolsay-moir* 1562 RSS (V, 1112)]; [*Keappolsaybeg*, *Keappolsaymoir* 1563 RSS (V, 1259)]; [*Kepbolsbeg* 1584 RSS (VIII, 1743)]; *Kepols* 1615 Retours (Arg., 16); *Kepols* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); [*Kelpols-Makeorie* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146)]; *Kerpollis* 1630 RMS (VIII, 1610); *Kippols* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67); [*Kepolsmore*, *Keppolsbeg* 1665 RMS (XI, 778)]; [*Keppolsmore* 1751 McDougall].

This place-name has been so worn linguistically, that the specific is not readily determinable. The generic has fared better and can be ascribed to ON *bólstaðr*, m., with a high degree of certainty.

## KILLIMSTER

Killimster, S, ND 313 566, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*North Killummister, North Kilmister, South Killummister, South Kilmister* 1557 OPS; *North-Kilmister, South Kilmister* 1565 RMS (IV, 1669); *Kyllamister* 1574 Sinclair (Mey); *South Killameter* 1580 Sinclair (Mey); *Kilmister* 1581 RMS (V, 277); *North Killamster, South-Killamster* 1591 RMS (V, 1977); *Chelmistre* 1592 RMS (V, 2078); *North et South Kilmister* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170); *North Kilmister, South Kilmister* 1605 Retours (Cai., 6); *South et North Kilmister* 1608 RMS (VI, 2155); *North et South Killamster* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *North Killamster, North Keilamster, South Killamster, South Keilamster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Kyllemster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *O. Kyllemster* 1667 RMS (XI, 1070); *Killomster* 1750 Roy; *Kilemster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *N. Killminster, S. Killminster* 1832 Thomson; *Kilmster* 1841 Census; [*kʲil̥mstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 396).

The specific is ON *kyl̥na*, f., 'a kiln' (cf. Waugh 1985, pp. 396-7).

The [n] in the consonant cluster, [ln], has nasalised the following labial to [m] and has subsequently been assimilated with it (cf. Waugh 1985, p. 397). This development can only have occurred after the loss of the inflectional ending, lost owing to its unstressed position. There is also a parallel development in *Occumster* (see below).

## KINABOLS, KINNABUS

1. Kinabolls †, S, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Kinabolls* 1751 McDougall.

2. Kinnabus, S, NR 295 424, Parish of Kildalton & Oa, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Kynnabols* 1588 RMS (V, 1491); *Kynnabols* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Kinabus* 1751 McDougall; *Kinabus* 1776 Mackenzie; *Kinabus* 1804 Heather.

The specific is most likely the genitive sg. of ON *kinn*, f., 'a cheek' in place-names used of 'a steep hill-side or mountain-side' (cf. NG Indl. 1898, p. 60).

The name of no. 1 is no longer in use. It is found only on the McDougall map of 1751.

## KINNABUS see s.n. KINABOLS

## KIRBIST, KIRBISTER, KIRBUSTER, KIRKABISTER, KIRKIBOST

1. Kirbist, S, HY 758 523, North Ronaldsay, in Parish of Cross & Burness, Orkney.

*Kirbist* 1733 OR.



2. Kirbist †, S, Sanday, in Parish of Cross & Burness, Orkney.  
*Kirkabuster* 1615 OrkTes (no. 151)
3. Kirbist, S, HY 473 292, Egilsay, in Rousay Parish, Orkney.  
*Kirbustar* 1595 OR; *Kirbuster* 1619 DOH (III, p. 58); [*kɪrbəst*] 1952 Marwick (p. 72).
4. Kirbist, S, HY 429 437, Parish of Westray, Orkney.  
*Kirkbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 66); *Kirkbister-bewest* 1565 RMS (IV, 1668); *Kirkbister-bewest* 1589 RMS (V, 1612); *Kirkbuster-bewest* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Kirkbuster-bewest* 1606 RMS (VI, 1766); *Korbister-bewest* 1650 RMS (VI, 1553); *Kirkbustad* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Kirbust* 1776 Mackenzie.
5. Kirbister, S, HY 630 374, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney.  
*Kirbuster* 1595 OR; *Kirbuster* 1606 DOH (I, p. 274); [*Kirbuster L.* 1662 Blaeu (133-4)]; *Kirbuster* 1776 Mackenzie; [*kɪrbəstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 136).
6. Kirbister, S, HY 360 075, Parish of Orphir, Orkney.  
*Kirkbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 39); *Kirkbustir* 1500 OR; *Kirbuster* 1530 REO (p. 211); *Kirkbustare* 1574 REO (p. 291); *Kirbister* 1610 RMS (VII, 247); *Kirbister* 1612 OrkTes (no. 24); *Kirbister* 1614 OR; *Kirbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Kirbister* 1620 DOH (III, p. 84); *Kirbuster* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2244); *Kirbister* 1642 OR; *Kirbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Kirbuster* 1776 Mackenzie; [*kɪrbəstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 105).
7. Kirbister, S, HY 282 164, Sandwick Parish, Orkney.
8. Kirbister, S, HY 252 141, Stromness Parish, Orkney.  
*Kirkbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 68); *Kirkbustare* 1500 OR; *Kirkbustare* 1595 OR; *Kirbister* 1614 OR; *Kirbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Kirbuster* 1620 DOH (III, p. 103); *Kirkbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4).
9. Kirbister, S, HY 503 165, Shapinsay Parish, Orkney.  
*Kirkbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 73); *Kirbuster* 1595 OR; *Kirbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Kirkbuster* 1615 RMS (VII, 1312); *Kirkbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Kirbuster* 1739 OR; *Kirbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.
10. Kirbister, S, HY 58 08, Parish of St. Andrews & Deerness, Orkney.  
*Kirbuster* 1500 OR; *Kirkbuster* 1502 REO (p. 412); *Kirkbuster* 1585 RMS (V, 836); *Kirbustar* 1595 OR; *Kirkbuster* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Kirkabuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4).
11. Kirbuster, S, HY 681 238, Parish of Stronsay, Orkney.  
*Kirbustar*, *Kirbuster* 1595 OR; *Kirkbister* 1624 OR; *Kirkbusta* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); [*kɪrbəstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 25).
12. Kirbuster, S, ND 325 910, Parish of Walls & Flotta, Orkney.  
*Kirkbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 63); *Kirbustar* 1500 OR; *Kirkbuster* 1565 RSS

(V, 1959); *Kirbuster* 1595 OR; *Kirkbuster* 1613 OrkTes (no. 89); *Kirkbester* 1613 OrkTes (no. 90); *Kirbuster* 1613 OrkTes (no. 93); *Kirbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Kirkbuster* 1648 Retours (O&S, 57); *Kirkbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Kirbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

13. Kirkabister, S, HU 491 382, Bressay, Shetland.

*Kirkbust*, *Kirkbuster* (c 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (ff. 2v., 6r.)); *Kirkbustar*, *Kirkbuster* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Kirbuster* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Kirkbuster* 1592-3 SheDoc (207); *Kirkbuster* 1610 RMS (VII, 313); *Kirkabister* 1693 Retours (O&S, 143); *Kirkabuster* 1716 ROZ (SA); *Kirkabister* 1878 OS1; [ˈkɪrkabɪstər] 1987 Stewart (p. 58).

14. Kirkabister, S, HU 487 666, Lunnasting, Parish of Nesting, Shetland.

*Kirkbuster* (c 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (ff. 2r., 5v.)); *Kyrbuster* 1544-5 SheDoc2 (78); *Kirkabustar* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Kirkabister* 1589 SheDoc (153); *Kirkabister* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Kirkabuster* 1604 CBS1; *Kirkabuster* 1621 RegTes (SA); *Kirbister* 1634 RegTes (SA); *Kirkabuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Kirkabuster* 1878 OS1; [ˈkɪrkabɪstər] 1987 Stewart (p. 56).

15. Kirkabister, S, HU 495 580, Parish of Nesting, Shetland.

*Kirkbuster* (c 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (f. 5v.)); *Kirkabuster* 1560 SheDoc2 (119); *Kirkabuster* 1561 SheDoc2 (131); *Kirkeabister* 1563 RSS (V, 1419); *Kirkabustar*, *Kirkabustare* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Kirkebuster* 1584 SheDoc (64); *Kirkabister* 1585 BruSym (SA); *Kirkabister* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Kirbuster* 1602 CBS1; *Kirkabuster* 1605 Retours (O&S, 1); *Kirkabuster* 1605 SheDoc (408); *Kirkabuster* 1607 SheDoc (436); *Kirkabuster* 1607 Retours (O&S, 2); *Kirkabuster* 1608 SheDoc (467); *Kirkabuster* 1624 DOH (II, p. 46); *Kirkbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Kirkbuster* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Kirkbuster* 1781 Preston; [ˈkɪrkabɪstər] 1987 Stewart (p. 56).

16. Kirkabister, S, HU 540 955, Yell, Shetland.

*Kirkabystir* 1550-1 SheDoc2 (95); *Kirkabusta* 1578-9 SheDoc2 (260); *Kirkabusta* 1579 RMS (IV, 2850); *Kirkabister* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Kirkabusta* 1599 SheDoc (280); *Kirkabusta* 1604 SheDoc (377); *Kirkabuster* 1615 RegTes (SA); *Kirkcabister* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1049); *North Dekubister* 1666 RMS (XI, 932); *Northkirkbister* 1672 Retours (O&S, 106); *Kirkabister* 1692 Retours (O&S, 142); *Over Kirkabister* 1698 Retours (O&S, 149); *Kirkabuster*, *Kirkabustr* 1716 ROZ (SA); *Kirkabister* 1878 OS1; [ˈkɪrkabɪstər] 1987 Stewart (p. 54).

17. Kirkabister, S, HU 514 925, Yell, Shetland.

*South Dirubister* 1666 RMS (XI, 932); *Southkirkbuster* 1672 Retours

(O&S, 106); *Neather Kirkabister* 1698 Retours (O&S, 149); [*kʲɪrkabʲɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 58).

18. Kirkibost, S, NG 552 177, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire.

19. Kirkibost, S, NB 189 347, Uig Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire. *Kirabust* 1776 Mackenzie; *Kirabust* 1804 Heather; *Kirkibost* 1821 Johnson; *Kirkibost* 1832 Thomson; [*kʲiðkəbɔst*] 1954 Oftedal (p. 382).

20. \*Kirkibost, NF 780 657, S, North Uist, Inverness-shire. *Kirkepost* 1561 OPS (p. 374); *Kirkepost* 1578 OPS (p. 374); *Kirkibost* 1644 OPS (p. 374); *Kirkibost* 1644 Retours (Inv., 68); *Kirkabol* 1662 Blaeu (129-30); *Kirkibost* 1666 RMS (XI, 902); *Il Kirkbol* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Kirkebust* 1776 Mackenzie; *Kirkebust* 1794 Huddart; *Kirkebust* 1804 Heather; *Kirkibost* 1832 Thomson; *Kirkibost* 1886 Admiralty.

The specific is ON *kirkja*, f., 'a church', possibly originally in the genitive sg. (cf. Forbes 1923, p. 229; Jakobsen 1936, p. 27; Marwick 1952, pp. 2, 25, 32, 56, 72, 78, 105, 136, 163, 182; Stewart 1987, pp. 54-9; Lamb 1992, p. 38).

Marwick does not mention any *Kirbister* under Sandwick parish (see no. 7), but this is probably because this name has not been a farm-name for a considerable period. The name is still known in Orkney, though.<sup>80</sup> The location of *Kirbist*, Sanday (no. 2) is not known. It has been documented only once. No. 20 no longer exists as an independent entity, owing to severe coastal erosion in the area. It is now only reflected in the formally secondary names, *Claddach Kirkibost* and *Kirkibost Island*. The element *Claddach* is Gaelic and means 'a shore, a beach'.

It is peculiar that initial [*k*] has not been palatalised in any of the Orkney examples (nos 1-12), as often happens with [*k*] before a front vowel in Orkney (Marwick 1995, pp. 35-6). The inflectional ending has been dropped early, thus placing the consonant cluster, [*-rkb-*], under stress, forcing it to drop the middle consonant (cf. principle in Seip 1955, p. 155). In Shetland, (nos 13-17), the remnant of the inflectional marker (or alternatively a supporting vowel (Jakobsen 1928, p. LVIII)) has encouraged the retention of medial [*k*]. In Lewis, ON [*-r-*] has developed into [*-ð-*], as is normal (Borgstrøm 1940, § 70, pp. 71-2).

80. Information from W. P. L. Thomson, personal correspondence.

**KIRBISTER** see s.n. **KIRBIST**

**KIRBUSTER** see s.n. **KIRBIST**

**KIRKABISTER** see s.n. **KIRBIST**

**KIRKIBOST** see s.n. **KIRBIST**

### **LABOST**

Labost, S, NB 279 494, Barvas Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

[*la:bɔst*] c. 1930 Duncan.

This name is difficult to interpret, owing to the lack of early documentation. Maciver (1934, p. 27) has suggested ON *lá*, f., ‘the sea, the water which is transported onto the beach’, but this is little more than informed guesswork and should not be considered likely.

### **LEODEBEST**

Leodebest, S, ND 183 346, Parish of Latheron, Caithness.

*Leodulster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Leodabest* 1832 Thomson.

The origin of this name is obscure because of the late documentary evidence. It is impossible to ascertain the origin of the specific. The generic might possibly be ON *bólstaðr*, m., but may alternatively be ON *setr*, n., ‘a shieling’, judging from the earlier reference.

### **LEURBOST**

Lurbost, S, NB 373 258, Lochs Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

*Duyrbost* 1662 Blaeu (117-8); *Duyrbost* 1662 Blaeu (131-2); *Duyrbost* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Lurbost* 1776 Mackenzie; *Lurbust* 1794 Huddart; [*Loch Lurbust* 1794 Huddart]; *Lurbost* 1804 Heather; *Liurbost* 1821 Johnson; *Luirbost* 1832 Thomson; [*L. Luirbost* 1886 Admiralty]; [*ljur:bɔst*] 1954 Oftedal (p. 399).

This place-name is somewhat perplexing. The generic is not ON *leir*, n., ‘clay, mud’ (cf. Capt. Thomas 1876, p. 479), as the modern pronunciation would in that case have been [*lje:ðə*] (Oftedal 1954, pp. 399-400). Oftedal goes on to suggest a number of derivations, but none is satisfactory – as Oftedal himself is aware. The earliest forms suggest an entirely different origin but these are most likely a gross misrepresentation or misspelling by Blaeu (van Keulen, being derived from Blaeu, usually lists the same forms). The origin of the specific is not determinable and must, therefore, remain open.

## LEWSBAMBSTER

Lewsbambster, S, Caithness.

*Lewbamster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1729); *Lewsbambster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53).

This name is only mentioned in two sources, and even its whereabouts can be pinpointed no more precisely than to Caithness. Judging from the documentary evidence, the generic may be ON *bólstaðr*, m., whereas the specific, on the other hand, cannot be said to be anything but obscure.

## LIBISTER, \*LIEBOST, LYBSTER

1. Libister, S, HY 40 32, Parish of Rousay, Orkney.

*Libusteris land* 1601 Uthell Book (p. 67); *Libister* 1644 Retours (O&S, 45); *Lybister* 1670 Retours (O&S, 101).

2. \*Liebost, NG 40 50, Parish of Snizort, Skye, Inverness-shire.

*Lebost* 1630 OPS (pp. 347-8); *Lebost* 1630 Retours (Inv., 50); *Laybost* 1666 RMS (XI, 902); *Lieboast* 1688 Retours (Inv., 109); [*li:əbɔst*] 1963 Gordon.<sup>81</sup>

3. Lybster, S, ND 025 686, Parish of Reay, Caithness.

*Libister* 1538 RMS (III, 1798); *Lybuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Lybstar* 1585 Sinclair (Mey); *Lybister* 1587 RMS (V, 1341); *Lybuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Lybistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Lybuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Lybuster* 1624 Retours (Cai., 12); *Lybister* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Lybuster* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2207); *Lybuster* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Lybster* 1658 RMS (X, 634); *Lybuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Libuster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Lybistir* 1667 RMS (XI, 1070); *Leibster* 1750 Roy; *Labster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Lybster* 1832 Thomson; [*laipstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 77).

4. Lybster, S, ND 248 355, Parish of Latheron, Caithness.

*Lybuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Lybistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Lybuster* 1630 Retours (Cai., 18); *Lybuster* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Lybster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Lybuster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Lyibster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Lyibstir* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Lybster* 1750 Dorret; *Leibster* 1755 Roy (38-1); *Lybster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Lybster* 1832 Thomson.

The specific is ON *hlíð*, f., 'a slope' (cf. Gordon 1963, p. 108; Thuesen 1978, p. 65; Waugh 1985, p. 76).

Two of the names are no longer applied to farms. *Libister* in Orkney (no. 1) is now an obsolete district name; the original farm seems to have

81. Gordon, Brigit, 'Some Norse place-names in Trotternish', in *Scottish Gaelic Society*, vol. x, 1, (London, 1963), p. 108.

become subordinate to *Langskaill* early on (Thuesen 1978, p. 65). Marwick does not mention it in his *Orkney Farm Names*. The settlement of *Liebost* in Skye is now lost. The name is now only reflected as a secondary formation in the field name *Sròn Leubost*.<sup>82</sup>

**\*LIEBOST see s.n. LIBISTER**

### **LOEDEBEST**

Loedebist, S, ND 137 321, Parish of Latheron, Caithness.

*Lodubiste* 1619 RMS (VII, 2008); *Lodubist* 1657 Retours (Cai., 25);

*Leodabest* 1832 Thomson.

The specific is obscure. The generic may ultimately be from ON *bólstaðr*, m.

### **LURABUS, LYRABUS**

1. Lurabus, S, NR 337 435, Parish of Kildalton & Oa, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Learabalsay* 1562 RSS (V, 1112); *Learabolsay* 1563 RSS (V, 1259);

*Lerepols* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Lerepols* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146);

*Lerepollis* 1662 Retours (Arg., 68); *Lyrebols* 1662 Blaeu (121-3);

*Lerepolis* 1665 RMS (XI, 778); *Lurabus* 1751 McDougall; *Lyrbos* c. 1734

van Keulen.

2. Lyrabus, S, NR 292 642, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Lyrebols* 1662 Blaeu (121-3); *Lyrebols* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Lynabolls*

1751 McDougall.

Although the two names today have different expressions, they are most likely of the same origin. The specific is probably ON *leirr*, m., ‘clay, mud’ (cf. Gillies 1906, p. 232; Maceacharna 1976, p. 85).

**LYBSTER see s.n. LIBISTER**

**LYRABUS see s.n. LURABUS**

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82. The Caithness *Lybsters* have spurred two formally secondary place-names, *Achalibster* (ND241 487, Parish of Watten (*Achaliebuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53))) and *Achlibster* (ND116 522, Parish of Halkirk), both of which represent later shieling expansion into the interior of Caithness. That this expansion is late is effectively visible in the fact that the generic element of these formally secondary names, *achadh*, is of Gaelic origin.

### **\*MEABOST**

\*Meabost, R, NG 536 159, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire.

The name does not exist as an independent place-name but is found in a formally secondary formation as part of a topographical name, *Ben Meabost*.

Forbes (1923, p. 263) has interpreted the specific as ON *mjór*, adj., 'narrow, tight', but, because of the lack of early documentary evidence this cannot be ascertained and the interpretation must remain open.

### **MELBOST**

1. Melbost Borge, S, NB 415 576, Parish of Barvas, Lewis, Ross-shire. *Ulbost* ? 1718 Rental of Lewis; *Ulbost Borge* ? 1821 Johnson; *Ulbost Borge* ? 1832 Thomson.

2. Melbost, S, NB 465 327, Stornoway Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire. *Naalgabost* ? 1662 Blaeu (131-2); *Melbust* 1776 Mackenzie; *Melbust* 1794 Huddart; *Melbust* 1804 Heather; *Melbost* 1821 Johnson; *Melbost* 1832 Thomson; [*mjaɫabɔst*] 1954 Oftedal (p. 394).

The origin of these two names is ON *melr*, m., 'a sand bank, a gravel bank' (cf. Oftedal 1954, p. 394).

The forms listed under no. 1 must be considered to be misrepresentations. The locality to which these refer is *Melbost Borge* and this is why I find it unlikely that they should represent a now lost \**Ulbost*. *Melbost Borge* has had *Borge* (< ON *borg*, f., 'a castle, fortification') affixed as a reciprocating element, in order to single the name out from the other *Melbost* in Lewis (no. 2).

### **MIBOST, MIDBISTER**

1. Mibost, S, NM 202 596, Island of Coll, Argyllshire. *Mebois* 1542 RMS (III, 2787); *Mebois* 1617 RMS (VII, 1652); *Mebois* 1642 Retours (Arg., 59); *Mebois* 1643 RMS (IX, 1310); *Mebois* 1656 RMS (X, 531); *Mebois* 1674 Retours (Arg., 81).

2. Midbister, S, ND 446 900, Parish of South Ronaldsay, Orkney.

The specific is ON *miðr*, adj., 'in the middle'. This specific is very fitting as the settlements to which these names refer are situated between other *bólstaðr*-settlements or other considerable settlements. *Mibost* (no. 1) is situated between *Arnabost* (see above) and the settlement of *Grishipol* (see Appendix 2, below). *Midbister* (no. 2) is flanked by *Isbister* (see s.n. *Easterbister*, no. 4, above) and *Wasbister* (see *Wasbister* no. 1, below).

## **MIDBISTER** see s.n. MIBOST

### **MIRBISTER**

Mirbister, S, HY 306 199, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney.

*Mirkbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 53); *Myrkbuttir* 1500 OR; *Myrkumbuster* 1504 REO (p. 77); *Mirkbustar* 1595 OR; *Mirkbuster* 1610 REO (p. 183); *Mirbuster* 1685 Retours (O&S, 137); *Mirbister* 1727 OR.

The specific has been interpreted as a personal name *Myrk* and *Myrkjartan* (the latter merely because of the 1504 entry (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 143)), but the most likely interpretation is ON *myrkr*, adj., 'dark'.

ON [-y-] has changed to Ork. [-ɹ-] (Marwick 1995, p. 32). The cluster, [-rkb-], has been reduced by the dropping of the middle consonant (cf. the principle in Seip 1955, p. 155).

### **MISBISTER**

Misbister, S, ND 330 887, Parish of Walls & Flotta, Orkney.

Owing to the lack of early documentary evidence, the origin of the specific cannot be ascertained. The generic is possibly ON *bólstaðr*, m., although it might alternatively be analogical *-bister*.

The name is not mentioned by Marwick. On the OS Pathfinder series, 1:25.000 map, the name refers to what seems to be a small disused farm-site. The name is also reflected in the topographical name *Misbister Geo*.

### **MUBUSTER**

Mubuster, S, HY 64 28, Stronsay, Orkney.

*Musbuster* 1591 RMS (V, 1895); *Musbuster* 1595 OR; *Mubuster* 1646 RMS (IX, 1626).

The specific is possibly ON *mosi*, m., 'bog, marsh, moor' (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 25). However, ON [o] only occasionally develops into [u] (Marwick, 1995, p. 32).

### **MYBSTER**

Mybster, S, ND 169 526, Parish of Watten, Caithness.

*Myrebestare*, *Myrebistare* 1566 RMS (IV, 1705); *Mybster* 1832 Thomson. The specific is ON *myrr*, f., 'a moor, a bog'.

### **NEEBISTER, NIPSTER, NYBSTER**

1. Neebister, S, HY 630 374, Parish of Cross & Burness, Orkney.

*Nibuster* 1449 RMS (IX, 2030); *Nybuster* 1500 OR; *Nesbustar* 1595 OR;



*Nibister* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1894); *Nibuster* 1679 Retours (O&S, 122); [*nibestār*] 1952 Marwick (p. 13).

2. *Nipster*, S, ND 217 587, Parish of Watten, Caithness.

3. *Nybster*, S, ND 363 633, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Nybistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Nybister* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Nybster* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2207); *Nybster* 1726 Macfarlane (I, 157); *Nybster* 1748 Sinclair (Freswick); *Neibster* 1750 Roy; *Nibster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Nibster* 1832 Thomson; [*naibstār*] 1985 Waugh (p. 405).

The specific is ON *nyr*, adj., 'new' (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 13; Waugh 1985, p. 405; Lamb 1992, p. 47).

ON [-y:-] has become [-i-] in Orkney (Marwick 1995, p. 32), whereas in Caithness it has been diphthongised to [ai] (Waugh 1985, Appendix) – at least in the case of no. 3., *Nybster*.

The 1595 entry for no. 1 is a scribal error or a misreading of the original manuscript.

### NEDRABISTER

*Nedraber*, S, HU 395 540, Weisdale, Parish of Tingwall, Shetland.

*Unerbuster* 1575-6 SheDoc2 (221); *Underbuster* 1610 SheDoc (512); *Nethrebuster*, *Nethrebuster* 1716 ROZ (SA); [*nedrabištār*] 1987 Stewart (p. 59).

Judging from the earliest references, the specific seems to be ON *undir*, adv., 'under, below', later replaced by Shetl. *nedra*, comp. adj., 'lower (of two)'.

The specific element is used in reciprocation with Scots/Shetl. *ever(a)*, adv., 'upper' in *Evraber* (see s.n. *Eorrabus*, above).

### NERABUS

*Nerabus*, S, NR 226 552, Parish of Kilchoman, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Nerrabollsadhh* 1588 RMS (V, 1491); *Nerobollis* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Nerrabolsadh* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Nerobollis* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Morabullsadhe* ? 1630 RMS (VIII, 1610); *Nerraboltfadvi* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67); *Nerobols* 1665 RMS (XI, 778); *Newbolside* 1674 Retours (Arg., 82); *Morabulfadti* ? 1687 Retours (Arg., 93); *Nerabolls* 1751 McDougall.

The specific has been interpreted as ON *neðri*, comp. adj., 'lower' (cf. Gillies 1906, p. 234; Maceacharna 1976, p. 77). However, ON [ð] is not normally lost or assimilated in the combination [ðr]. At the most, it is changed to [d], as in modern Norw. *nedre* [nɛdrə], so this interpretation is unlikely. On the basis of the documentary evidence, an origin in ON

*nærri*, comp. adj., 'closer', would seem to be the most likely. What this specific of proximity refers to is not easily discernible from today's conditions.

### NESBISTER, NISABOST

1. Nesbister, S, HU 397 451, Whiteness, Parish of Tingwall, Shetland.

*Nesbuster*, *Nesbuter* (c 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (ff. 3v., 5r.)); *Nosbester* 1560 SheDoc2 (119); *Nesbuster* 1561 SheDoc2 (131); *Nesbuster* 1563 RSS (V, 1419); *Neisbister* 1570 SheDoc2 (185); *Neisbister* 1587 SheDoc (99); *Nesbester* 1597 SheDoc (264); *Neisbister* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Neisbister* 1600 RMS (VI, 1083); *Neisbuster* 1605 Retours (O&S, 1); *Neisbuster* 1605 SheDoc (408); *Nesbuster* 1607 Retours (O&S, 2); *Nestbuster* 1607 SheDoc (436); *Nisbister* 1608 RegTes (SA); *Nesbuster* 1608 SheDoc (467); *Nesbuster* 1609 SheDoc (485); *Nesbuster* 1716 ROZ (SA); *Nesbister* 1878 OS1; [*nɪsbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 57).

2. Nisabost, S, NG 052 968, Isle of Harris, Inverness-shire.

*Nisabust* 1776 Mackenzie; *Nisabust* 1794 Huddart; *Nisabust* 1804 Heather; *Nisibost* 1805 Bald(1); *Nisibost* 1832 Thomson; [*nɪsəbɔst*] c. 1930 Duncan.

The specific is ON *nes*, n., 'a promontory'. (cf. Capt. Thomas 1876, p. 479; Forbes 1923, p. 269; Maciver 1934, p. 53; Stewart 1987, p. 57).

The /-a-/ in *Nisabost* is a connecting vowel, a feature common in Gaelic in order to avoid a consonant cluster (Borgstrøm 1940, § 298, pp. 213-4).

### NIPSTER see s.n. NEEBISTER

### NISABOST see s.n. NESBISTER

### NORBISTER

Norbister, S, HU 375 326, Burra, Parish of Lerwick, Shetland.

*Northbustar*, *Northbuster* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Northtbuster* 1578 SheDoc2 (254); *Norbister*, *Norbuster* 1602 CBS1; *Norbuster* 1623 DOH (II, p. 7); *Norbister* 1624 DOH (II, p. 37); *Northbuster* 1628 RegTes (SA); *Norbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); [*nɔrbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 58).

The specific is ON *norðr*, adv., 'north'. *Norðr* is used in reciprocation with ON *synstr*, superlative adj., 'southernmost' in *Symbister*, situated nearby (see below).

**NYBSTER** see s.n. **NEEBISTER**

**OCCUMSTER**

Occumster, S, ND 268 358, Parish of Latheron, Caithness.

*Ocamistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Occamster* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Okbuster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Nether Okbuistr*, *O. Okbuster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Oackinster* 1755 Roy (38-1); *Oakmaster* 1832 Thomson.

The interpretation of this name is complicated. The medial /-m-/ points to an earlier [-nb-] or even [-ngb-] consonant cluster, which would consequently have developed into [-mb-] and later to [-m-]. Similarly, initial /Occu-/ (presumably [ɔk(ə)-] < [ɔ:k(ə)-]) points to an earlier pronunciation in [a:ka-], [o(:)ka-], or [a:ko-], [o(:)ko-]. There are very few ON words or names which would have been pronounced [a:kan], [a:kon], [a:kang], [a:kong], or [o(:)kan], [o(:)kang], [o(:)kon], [o(:)kong]. In fact the only real possibility is the common ON personal name *Hákon*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 448-51). Since personal names normally take the genitive in place-names, the original form was probably the genitive sg. form, *Hákonar*. It is, however, uncertain why [h-] has been lost, as initial [h-] is normally retained before vowels, although Waugh (1985, p. 287) finds that this loss has occurred elsewhere in Caithness. The loss of [h-] before vowels is, however, not uncommon in Germanic, nor is it uncommon in Scandinavian, especially East Scandinavian (see e.g. Minugh, David, 'As Old as the 'Ills: Variable Loss of 'h' in Swedish Dialects', in *NOWELE*, vol. 6, pp. 23-45, (Odense, 1983)). In Norwegian, a loss in initial position is also occasionally recorded, but not before 1300 (Seip, 1955, p. 276). Therefore, such a loss in this name cannot be ruled out.

**ONZIEBUST**

1. Onziebust, S, HY 471 281, Egilsay, in Rousay Parish, Orkney.  
*Unyebistir* 1609 OrkTes (no. 60); *Unyeabister* 1612 OrkTes (no. 60); [ɔnjeɸɪst] 1952 Marwick (p. 72).

2. Onziebust, S, HY 450 267, Island of Wyre, Rousay Parish, Orkney.  
*Anyeabister* 1612 OrkTes (no. 54); *Onziebist* 1876 OS1.

The etymology of this name is not quite clear. There are two identical names in Orkney. Strangely, the two settlements bearing the name face each other on neighbouring islands (Wyre and Egilsay), only separated by the Sound of Rousay. It is possible that these two names reflect a now lost name of the said sound, such as the genitive sg. of \**Qngi*, m. (< ON *qngr*, adj., 'narrow, tight'), with a reference to the long passage of the

sound.<sup>83</sup> *Bólstaðr*-names compounded with names of water-courses are attested elsewhere, in particular in Norway (cp. e.g. *Gibostad*, Lenvik sn., Troms fylke and *Grytebost*, Borgund sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke).

ON [ɔ-] has become Ork. [ɔ-] (Marwick 1995, p. 33). The combination [ng] usually becomes [ŋ] in Orkney, but has here remained two separate consonants. The ON inflectional ending has been reduced to [e].

### ORBISTER, ORBOST

1. Orbister, S, HU 311 769, Parish of Northmaven, Shetland.  
*Orabustare* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Orabister* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Orbuster* 1611 SheDoc (541); *Orbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Arrabuster* 1666 RMS (XI, 932); *Orbister* 1672 Retours (O&S, 106); [ʔorbɪstər] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

2. Orbost, S, NG 256 432, Parish of Bracadale, Skye, Inverness-shire.  
*Orbost* 1662 Blaeu (127-9); *Orbost* 1832 Thomson.

The specific is probably the genitive sg. of ON *á*, f., 'a stream'. (cf. Stewart 1987, 55).

The 1577, 1589 and 1666 forms of no. 1 seem to show a connecting vowel (Jakobsen 1928, p. LVIII), which has later been dropped. The change ON [a:] > Shetl. [ɔ], is common in Shetland (Jakobsen, 1928, p. XLIV).

### ORBOST see s.n. ORBISTER

### OUTRABISTER, TREBISTER, UTRABISTER

1. Outrabister, S, HU 503 726, Lunnasting, Parish of Nesting, Shetland.  
*Uterluser* ? 1563 SheDoc2 (136); *Utrabustare* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Uterbuster* 1586 RMS (V, 1045); *Utrabister* 1623 DOH (II, p. 23); *Utrabuster* 1716 ROZ (SA); *Outrabister* 1878 OS1; [ʔutrabɪstər] 1987 Stewart (p. 56).

2. Trebister, S, HU 448 389, Gulberwick, Parish of Lerwick, Shetland.  
*Utrabust* (c. 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (ff. 2v., 4v.)); *Uterbuster* 1565 SheDoc2 (145); *Utrabustar* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Outrabister* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Utrabister, now Trebister* 1716 ROZ (SA); *Trebister* 1878 OS1; [ʔtre:bɪstər] 1987 Stewart (p. 54).

3. Utrabister, S, HU 519 923, Yell, Shetland.  
*Utrabuster* 1716 ROZ (SA); [ʔutrabɪstər] 1987 Stewart (p. 54).

83. Marwick (1952, p. 72) suggests that the specific of the hill-name on Shapinsay, *Unyetuak*, may be of the same origin. However, this specific might rather be from ON *angi*, m., 'a sting, a sharp point'.

The specific is the ON comparative adj. *ytri*, 'outer' (cf. Stewart 1987, pp. 54-5, 56, 58).

The settlement of no. 1 is situated at the tip of a promontory, further out than the other settlements in the vicinity. In no. 3, *ytri* is used in reciprocation with *Kirkabister*, nearby (see s.n. *Kirbist*, no. 15, above)

**OVERABIST** see s.n. **EORRABUS**

**OVERBIST** see s.n. **EORRABUS**

### **PERSABUS**

Persabus, S, NR 417 690, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Persabolls* 1751 McDougall.

Owing to the lack of early documentary evidence, the interpretation of this name is uncertain. This name has been interpreted as containing ON *prestr*, m., 'a priest, a parson' – used as a by-name, as the specific (cf. Maceacharna 1976, p. 85). This analysis would rely on a metathesis of [r] and [e] with a subsequent loss of [t] in the developed consonant cluster [rst]. An alternative interpretation has been forwarded by Gillies (1906, p. 236), who is of the opinion that the present form is due to a translation of ON *prestr*, m., to Gaelic *pearsa*, f., 'a person' (< Lat. *persona*), here in the sense of 'a parson'. Formally, this Gaelic appellative is plausible and virtually the only possibility. However, since there are no other *bólstaðr*-names in the Hebrides which have a Gaelic specific, this possibility should be approached with caution. Gaelic seems to have been on the march earlier in Islay than elsewhere in the Hebrides, so the possibility that either a Gaelic word or a Norse loan from Gaelic should be used to compound a *bólstaðr*-name would be more natural here in Islay than elsewhere. It is possible, however, that the modern form represents a partial gaelicisation of ON *prestr*, m. If this is the case, this process of gaelicisation must have occurred at an early stage of bilingualism.

**PRABOST** see s.n. **BRABSTER**

### **RENNIBISTER**

Rennibister, S, HY 397 126, Firth Parish, Orkney.

*Rannebustar* 1500 OR; *Ranybustar* 1595 OR; *Ranibuster* 1618 DOH (III, p. 31); *Rambuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Rambuster* 1687 Commis. Rec. (OLM 2, p. 175); *Renibuster* 1776 Mackenzie; *Rennibister* 1794 OR.

The specific may formally be a river-name *\*Renna*, f., which is fairly common in Norway (cf. e.g. NG IX, 80; XI, 275; XII, 141; XIII, 402; XV, 235), and might refer to the stream south of *Rennibister* which runs into the *Oyce of Rennibister*. In Orcadian documents /a/ often represents an Ork. [ɛ], a common development of ON [e]. The specific has alternatively been interpreted as the genitive sg. of an ON personal name, either *\*Renni*, m./*\*Renna*, f. (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 116). No such names have been attested, making this suggestion rather unlikely.

### RISABUS

Risabus, S, NR 313 437, Parish of Kildalton & Oa, Islay, Argyllshire.

The specific is most likely ON *hrís*, n., 'brushwood' (cf. Capt. Thomas 1882, p. 256), although the lack of early sources means that this cannot be ascertained.

### ROBOLLS

Robolls, S, NR 396 668, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire. *Robolse* 1494 RMS (II, 2216); *Robolse* 1542 RMS (III, 2835); *Robols* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Robols* 1615 Retours (Arg., 16); *Robols* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Robos* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Robollis* 1630 RMS (VIII, 1610); *Robols* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67); *Robose* 1662 Retours (Arg., 68); *Roboes* 1665 RMS (XI, 778); *Robolls* 1751 McDougall.

The specific is ON *ró*, f., 'nook, corner'.

### ROSTER

Roster, S, ND 265 396, Parish of Latheron, Caithness.

*Rosbister* 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Rosbuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Rosbuster* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Rosbuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Rosbuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Rosbuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Rosbistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Rosbuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Rosbister* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Rospuster* 1640 Retours (Cai., 20); *Rosbuster* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Rosbustar* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Robuster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Rosbuster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Robuster*, *Rubister* 1664 RMS (XI, 551); *Rosbuster* 1750 Dorret.

The specific is ON *hross*, n., 'a horse'. Initial [h-] in the combination [hr-] was lost early on (Seip 1955, p. 48; Waugh 1985, Appendix).

### RUMSTER

Rumster, ND 213 573, Parish of Watten, Caithness.

*Rumster* 1832 Thomson.

Because of the lack of early documentary evidence, the origin of this name is not certain. Formally, *-mster* suggests an original nasal + ON *bólstaðr*, m., in which case a cautious explanation of the specific might be ON *rúm*, n., 'a room, a partition'.

### SABISTON

Sabiston, S, HY 292 214, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney.

*Sebuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 29); *Sebastir* 1492 HSRO (p. 47); *Sabistar* 1500 OR; *Sabister* 1564 DOH (I, p. 147); *Sabister* 1566 RSS (V, 2554); *Sabister* 1568 DOH (I, p. 164); *Sabister* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Sabistoun* 1618 DOH (III, p. 32); *Sabiston* 1619 DOH (III, p. 50); *Sabistane* 1662 Retours (O&S, 94); *Sabistane* 1662 Retours (O&S, 95); *Sabiston* 1776 Mackenzie; *Sabiston* 1794 OR.

The specific is ON *sær*, m., 'a lake'. (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 137). This name is remarkable in so far as it is the only *bólstaðr*-name in Orkney to have developed along the same lines as the local names originating from ON *staðir*, m. pl., which often develop modern reflexes in *-ston* (rather than the elsewhere common *-sta*). The reason for this development is probably to be found in a English/Scots influence where the *-sta* suffix has been seen as a corruption of an ending in *-s + ton* (< ultimately from OE *tun*, 'a hamlet, a village').

### SCARRABUS, SCRABSTER

1. Scarrabus, S, NR 348 652, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Scarrabolsy* 1562 OPS (p. 266); *Scarrabolsay* 1562 RSS (V, 1112); *Starabolsay* 1563 RSS (V, 1259); *Starabolsay* RSS (V, 1879); *Skarabolse* 1584 RSS (VIII, 1743); *Skarbols* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Scalbols* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Skarabolls* 1751 McDougall.

2. Scrabster, S, ND 101 704, Parish of Thurso, Caithness.

*a Skarabolstad* c. 1387-1395 Orkn (p. 326); *Scrabustar* 1527 RSS (I, 3650); *Scrabuster* 1529 Sinclair (Mey); *Scrabistar* 1565 RMS (IV, 1669); *Scrabiust* 1578 Sinclair (Mey); *Scrabister*, *Scrabuster* 1581 RMS (V, 277); *Skrabstar* 1586 RMS (V, 1088); *Scrabuster* 1593 RMS (V, 2346); *Scrabister* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170); *Scrabster* 1603 RMS (VI, 1467); *Scrabister* 1605 Retours (Cai., 6); *Scrabister* 1606 RMS (VI, 1729); *Scrabister* 1608 RMS (VI, 2155); *Skrabuster* 1623 RMS (VIII, 481); *Scrabster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Scrabster* 1750 Dorret; *Scrabster* 1755 Roy (37-3); *Scrabsters* 1807 Arrowsmith; [*skrebstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 168).

3. *Scrabster*, S, NC 592 546, Parish of Dornoch, Sutherland.  
*Scrabestoun* 1478 RMS (II, 1404); *Strabuster* 1530 RSS (II, 624);  
*Scrabuster* 1551 RSS (IV, 1371); *Scrabuster* 1551 RSS (IV, 1375);  
*Skrabuster* 1555 RSS (IV, 3060); *Sc[r]abuster* 1565 RMS (IV, 1635);  
*Scrabustar* 1565 RMS (IV, 1669); *Kirkeboill* 1566 RSS (V, 3141);  
*Skrabuister* 1576 RSS (VII, 776); *Scrabuster* 1583 RMS (V, 580);  
*Scrabuster* 1588 RMS (V, 1546); *Skrabister* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170);  
*Skrabuster* 1608 RMS (VI, 2089); *Scrabister* 1616 Retours (Sut., 4);  
*Scrabtall* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Skrabistall* 1662 Blaeu (113-4); *Skrabister*  
 1662 RMS (XI, 200).

The specific has been interpreted as either the ON personal name *Skári*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 909), or ON *skári*, m., ‘a young sea-gull’ (Capt. Thomas 1882, p. 256; Gillies 1906, p. 238; Waugh 1985, p. 168). However, since there are three place-names of seemingly the same derivation, the personal name *Skári* seems an unlikely origin – especially considering the general rarity of this personal name. Instead, the specific is most probably ON *skári*, m. What the exact reference to gulls means is not entirely certain, but a situation near a colony of gulls is a possible suggestion.<sup>84</sup>

It is remarkable that the only two names in Sutherland which ultimately originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m., should be exactly parallel to two of the more unusual Caithness *bólstaðr*-names, namely *Scrabster* and *Ulbster* (see below). One should, therefore, bear in mind that the Sutherland examples may very well be analogical formations.

## SCRABSTER see s.n. SCARRABUS

## SEILEBOST, SELLIBISTER

1. *Seilebost*, S, NG 064 967, Isle of Harris, Inverness-shire.  
*Chillibost* 1805 Bald(1); *Chillibost* 1832 Thomson; [*feləbɔst*] c. 1930 Duncan.

2. *Sellibister*, S, HY 724 435, Parish of Cross & Burness, Sanday, Orkney.  
*Sellebustar* 1500 OR; *Celebester*, *Sillabester* 1570 SheDoc2 (185); *Cele-*

84. The Caithness *Scrabster* has spurred a formally secondary place-name, *Achscrabster* (ND 084 638, Parish of Thurso), which is situated no less than 8 kilometres away (as the crow flies). The generic of this name is Gaelic *achadh*, n. m., ‘a field’ and reflects a relatively late expansion of shieling activity into the interior of Caithness. That this expansion is late is effectively visible in the fact that the generic element of this formally secondary names is of Gaelic origin.



*bester* 1587 SheDoc (99); *Salibuster*, *Sellibustar* 1595 OR; *Celebester*, *Selebester* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Sillibuster* 1600 RMS (VI, 1081); *Celebester* 1600 RMS (VI, 1083); *Sellebester* 1615 OrkTes (no. 150); *Sellibuster*, *Silliebuster* 1617 DOH (III, p. 1); *Selloch buster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Selibuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

The specific is most likely ON *selja*, f., ‘a willow’ (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 13), although Capt. Thomas (1876, p. 480) suggested ON *skel*, f., ‘a sea-shell, a clam-shell’, for the Harris example (no. 1). His interpretation cannot be right, as its modern reflex would approximately have yielded [skelə-] and not a palatal sibilant as here. Lamb (1992, p. 58) suggests ON *salr*, m., ‘a hall, a house with one room’, but there is little documentary evidence to suggest so; only once, in the former 1595 entry, is this place-name written with an /-a-/ instead of the usual /-e-/.

The sources for Seilebost seems to reflect the palatal [j], which is used in Harris instead of [s] (Borgstrøm 1940, § 217, p. 159).

## **SELLIBISTER see s.n. SEILEBOST**

### **SHAWBOST**

Shawbost, S, NB 261 468, Barvas Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

*Schaboist* 1662 Blaeu (131-2); *Shabust* 1776 Mackenzie; *Shabust* 1794 Huddart; *Shabust* 1804 Heather; *North Shawbost*, *South Shawbost* 1821 Johnson; *North Shawbost*, *South Shawbost* 1832 Thomson; [ʃiabɔst] 1954 Oftedal (p. 377).

The specific has been interpreted as ON *sær*, m., ‘water’, here ‘a lake’ (Capt. Thomas 1876, p. 480; Oftedal 1954, p. 377). However, judging from the source evidence as well as the phonetic transcription, the variant form, *sjár*, m., appears to be more likely.

### **SHEBSTER**

Shebster, S, ND 017 640, Parish of Reay, Caithness.

*Schabuster* 1543 RMS (III, 2884); *Shabuster* 1560 Sinclair (Mey); *Schabuster*, *Schabuster* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Shebster* 1658 RMS (X, 634); *Shebster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Chebster* 1667 RMS (XI, 1070); *Shabster* 1750 Roy; *Shebster* 1782 Sinclair (Freswick); *Shabster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Shebster* 1832 Thomson; [ʃebstər] 1985 Waugh (p. 168).

The specific has been interpreted as ON *suðr*, adv., ‘south’ (Nicolson (in Horne) 1907, p. 41), but this does not appear to be the case, as Waugh (1985, p. 80) also notes. Formally, the source-forms as well as the pro-

nunciation would appear to suggest ON *sjár*, m., 'a lake' (a side form of ON *sær*, and *sjór*, m.), but even this interpretation cannot be right, as there is no large body of water in the vicinity.

### SIBMISTER

Sibmister, S, ND 165 661, Parish of Olig, Caithness.

*Subamster* 1538 RMS (III, 1798); *Subambuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Subamister* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Subambustar* 1565 RMS (IV, 1669); *Subambuster* 1581 RMS (V, 277); *Subamister* 1587 RMS (V, 1341); *Subamster* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170); *Subamister* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Subanister* 1605 Retours (Cai., 6); *Subanister* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Subawster* ? 1606 RMS (VI, 1729); *Subamster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Subamster* 1608 RMS (VI, 2155); *Subamister* 1612 RMS (VII, 766); *Subamister* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Subamister* 1632 Sinclair (Mey); *Subamister* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2207); *Subamister* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Sibanister* 1658 RMS (X, 634); *Subamister*, *Subamuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Sebuster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Subbanister* 1671 Retours (Cai., 28); *Sibmister* 1753 Sutherland; [*sɪbmɪstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 224).

The specific has been interpreted as ON *sunnan*, adv., 'southerly' (cf. Waugh 1985, p. 224). The present [-m-] indicates that [b-] in *bólstaðr* has been influenced by a preceding nasal, either [n], [nd], or [ng], in which case *sunnan* would fit. However, [-nn-] does not change to [-b-], so Waugh's suggestion cannot be right. The present [-b-] must go back to an original [b] or [p], as would /-u-/ presuppose an original [o], [o:], [u], [u:] (cf. Waugh 1985, Appendix). If this is the case, it is possible that the specific should be seen as the gen. sg. of a now lost stream-name \**Sópandi* derived from the participle ON *sópandi*, formed from ON *sópa*, vb., 'to rummage, to sweep, to stroke something so that it is transported from one place to another'. A stream runs straight through the settlement of *Sibmister* with a small waterfall close by, so this interpretation may not be altogether unlikely. A possible parallel is found in the Norwegian *Sopanstad* (NG VII, pp. 429-30).

Phonetically, the development seems to have been as follows: The inflectional ending appears to have been lost early, thus enabling the preceding [nd] to assimilate with the following labial [b] in *bólstaðr* to [m]. Simultaneously, the medial [-p-] becomes voiced, owing to its position between two vowels. At a late stage, [a] has been dropped, thus allowing for original [o:] to be assimilated to the vowel sound of the ensuing syllable, [ɪ].

## SIBSTER

1. Sibster, S, ND 152 598, Parish of Halkirk, Caithness.  
[*Substerbrauile* 1549 RSS (IV, 333)]; [*Subister-Braule* 1553 RMS (IV, 745)]; [*Subisterbraule* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5)]; [*Subusterbrale* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7)]; [*Subuster-brawle* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758)]; [*Sabusterbrand* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251)]; [*Subisterbrale* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2207)]; [*Sabusterbrand* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22)]; [*Subesterbraul* 1661 RMS (XI, 53)]; [*Substerbraill* 1671 Retours (Cai., 28)]; *Subster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Subster* 1832 Thomson.

2. Sibster, S, ND 323 530, Parish of Wick, Caithness.  
*Subister* 1538 RMS (III, 1798); [*Substerwick* 1549 Sinclair (Mey)]; *Subister* 1587 RMS (V, 1341); *Subister* 1612 RMS (VII, 766); *Subister* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Subister* 1644 Sinclair (Mey); *Sambuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Subster* 1666 RMS (XI, 958); [*Substerweik* 1671 Retours (Cai., 28)]; *Simpster* 1750 Roy; [*ˈsɪbstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 410).

The specific is ON *suðr*, adv., ‘south’ (cf. Waugh 1985, 410). The present-day pronunciation of Cai. [ɪ] for ON [u] is not typical for Caithness (Waugh 1985, Appendix). However, present [ɪ] may be caused by assimilation to the vowel sound of the ensuing syllable (Seip 1955, p. 133).

No. 1 figures in the earliest entries (1604-1640) only as the specific of a formally secondary name, *Subisterbraule*, whose generic appears to be an ON compound appellative *\*breiðvǫllr*, m., ‘broad field’. This construction is also found in the Caithness place-names Brawlbin and Braal (cf. Waugh 1985, pp. 65-66 and 145). For the sake of keeping the two *Sibsters* apart the 1549 and 1671 forms of no. 2 have been affixed the name of the parish in which this locality is situated; its 1661 and 1750 forms are, however, erroneous.

## SIMBISTER, SYMBISTER

1. Simbister, S, HY 66 43, Parish of Cross & Burness, Sanday, Orkney.  
*Synbustaith* 1500 OR; *Symbustar* 1595 OR; *Symbuster* 1617 DOH (III, p. 2); *Sinbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Simbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

2. Symbister, S, HU 372 299, Burra, Parish of Lerwick, Shetland.  
*Sinbustar*, *Sinbuster* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Simbister* 1760 BruSym (SA); *Symbister* 1878 OS1; [*ˈsɪmɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 58).

3. Symbister, S, HU 539 622, Whalsay, Parish of Whalsay & Skerries, Shetland.

*Simbuster*, *Sumbust* (c 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (ff. 2r., 5r., 7r.)); *Simbister* 1573 SheDoc2 (203); *Sinbuster* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Swnbuster* 1579 RMS (IV, 2850); *Symbuster* 1581 SheDoc (25); *Symbuster*

1581-2 SheDoc (30); *Synbuster* 1582 SheDoc (38); *Symbuster* 1582 SheDoc (39); *Simbister* 1585 BruSym (SA); *Simbuster* 1617 DOH (III, p. 5); *Symbester* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1049); *Stonebuster* ? 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Symbister* 1692 Retours (O&S, 142); [*ʃimɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 56).

Marwick (1952, p. 16), Stewart (1987, pp. 56, 58) and Lamb (1992, 58) have suggested that the specific is ON *sunnr*, adv., 'south' (a side form of ON *suðr*). Judging from the written forms as well as the present-day pronunciation, the specific may possibly rather be the ON superlative adj. *synstr*, 'most southerly' (as ON [*u*] does not usually become Shetl./Ork. [*ɪ*], whereas ON [*y*] normally does (Jakobsen 1928, p. XLVII; Marwick 1995, pp. 31, 32). It is possible, though, that the present [*ɪ*] is caused by assimilation to the vowel sound of the following syllable (cf. the principle described in Seip 1955, p. 131 and Sibster, above).

The specific of no. 2 reciprocates with *norðr* in *Norbister* (see s.n. above), whereas the specific of no. 3 reciprocates with *eystri* in *Isbister* (see s.n. above).

### SKEABOST

Skeabost, S, NG 418 482, Parish of Snizort, Skye, Inverness-shire.

*Skabost* 1832 Thomson; *Skeabost* 1886 Admiralty.

The specific is uncertain. It might represent the ON personal name *Skíði*, m. (cf. Macbain c. 1930 p. 22 & Lind 1905-15, cols 916-7), but in the light of the rarity with which personal names are compounded with *bólstaðr*-names, this possibility is somewhat unlikely. Since a river runs near the settlement to which this name refers, another possibility is that the specific is a stream-name in ON *\*Skjá-* or *\*Skíð-*,<sup>85</sup> but this suggestion is just as tentative as the former. All in all, the interpretation of the specific must remain open.

### SKEDGIBIST

Skedgibist, S, HY 61 36, Parish of Cross & Burness, Sanday, Orkney.

*Skegibuster* 1620 DOH (III, p. 114); *Skaigriebuster* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1894); *Skegebuster* 1649 RMS (IX, 2030); *Skegebuster* 1656 Retours (O&S, 78); *Skegabust* 1670 Retours (O&S, 99); *Skeyibuster* 1679 Retours (O&S, 122); [*ʃkidʒibəst*] 1952 Marwick (p. 22).

Marwick has interpreted the specific as containing the common ON personal name *Skeggi*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 910-1; 1931, cols 733-

85. Cf. Rygh, Olaf, *Norske elvenavne*, (Kristiania, 1904), pp. 215-6 & 217.

7). The earliest reference does seem to suggest this, so Marwick's suggestion is certainly possible, at least taking the phonetic transcription into consideration. Although there exists no description of the development of ON [-ggi] in Orkney, the change to [-dʒi] in Shetland is well attested (Jakobsen 1928, p. LIII), and there is no reason this change should not have occurred in Orkney as well.

## SKELBIST, SKELBISTER

1. Skelbist, S, HY 445 220, Gairsay, Parish of Evie & Rendall, Orkney. *Scelbister* 1723 Traill; *Scelbister* 1730 Traill.

2. Skelbister, S, HY 64 40, Parish of Cross & Burness, Sanday, Orkney. *scale butter* 1500 OR; *Skelbustar* 1595 OR; *Skelbester* 1656 Retours (O&S, 78); *Skelbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Skelbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

3. Skelbister, S, HY 34 04, Parish of Orphir, Orkney. *Skelbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 41); *Scalebustar* 1500 OR; *Skakebustar* 1595 OR; *Skakabuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Skobuster* 1642 OR; *Skobuster* 1642 RMS (IX, 1148).

4. Skelbister, S, HY 365 091, Parish of Orphir, Orkney.

According to Marwick (1952, pp. 13, 75, 106) and Lamb (1992, p. 59), the specific is ON *skáli*, m., 'a hall, a long-house, a house, a hut'. Furthermore, Marwick states that an origin in ON *skel*, f., 'a sea-shell', is not likely as all of the *bólstaðr*-names in *Skel*- are more or less inland, so that this suggestion is improbable.

At first sight it seems unlikely that ON *skáli*, m., should be right, as ON [a:] does not usually become [e] (Marwick 1995, p. 31). Nevertheless, Marwick does note that in the case of ON *skáli*, m., the development is peculiar. According to him, the usual development would yield an end result in [ska:l(i)] or [sko:l(i)] (and [skal-]/[skol-] if compounded). The modern pronunciation can hardly be explained by reference to Scots influence.

The 1595, 1614, and 1642 forms of no. 3 appear to be erroneous.

## SKELBISTER see s.n. SKELBIST

## SKIDGIBIST

Skidgibist, S, HY 35 05, Parish of Orphir, Orkney.

*Sketybustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 41); *Sketebustar* 1500 OR; *Sketebustar* 1503 REO (p. 414); *Sketebustar* 1595 OR; *Sketbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Skettebuster* 1614 OR; *Sketebuster* 1642 RMS (IX, 1148); *Skegebuster* 1643 Retours (O&S, 36); [*skidʒibest*] 1952 Marwick (p. 106).

The specific is not readily identifiable with any known ON linguistic material. Hence the interpretation must remain open (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 106).

### SKLENTABISTER

Sklentabister, HU 365 846, Parish of Northmaven, Shetland.

[*'sklentabɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

This place-name has only been recorded by Stewart (1987, p. 55). *Cooperston* is the modern name. Stewart derives the specific from either a stream name \**Slenta*, f., or a nickname \**Slenti*, m. Of the two, the former is probably the most likely, as there is a large stream running past the settlement. However, owing to the lack of early forms neither suggestion can be ascertained.

### \*SKORRIBEST

\*Skorribest, (S), NC 984 640, Parish of Reay, Caithness.

[*lɔn'skɔrəbest*] 1985 Waugh (p. 75).

This place-name does not exist as an independent formation today and it has never been recorded as such. It is only found as part of a formally secondary name, *Loanscorribest*, of which the generic is Gaelic *lòn*, m., 'a meadow' (cf. Waugh 1985, p. 75). The specific seems to be a place-name, a now lost \**Skorribest*, the generic of which may ultimately originate from ON *bólstaðr*. Its specific has been interpreted by Waugh as the ON personal name *Skorri*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 923-4), but owing to the lack of documentary sources, this cannot be proven.

### STANEPOLL, STEMBISTER, STEMSTER

1. Stanepoll †, S, Parish of Kilarrow and Kilmeny (?), Islay, Argyllshire. *Staynbolshay* 1562 OPS (p. 266); *Stayngolsay* 1562 RSS (V, 1112); *Stanebolsay* 1563 RSS (V, 1259); *Staynabolse* 1584 RSS (VIII, 1743); *Stanepoll* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Stanepoll* 1662 Retours (Arg., 68); *Stanepoll* 1665 RMS (XI, 778).

2. Stembister, S, HY 540 024, Parish of St. Andrews & Deerness, Orkney.

*Stanbuster* 1465 DOH (I, p. 48); *Stanbuster* 1465-6 REO (p. 192); *Stembister* 1576-7 REO (p. 294); *Stambustar* 1595 OR; *Stembister* 1615 OrkTes (no. 132); *Stembuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

3. Stemster, S, ND 038 657, Parish of Reay, Caithness.

*Stambuster* 1581 RMS (V, 277); *Stambister* 1605 Retours (Cai., 6); *Stambuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1729); *Stamister* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508);

*Stambuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Stampster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Stamester* 1750 Dorret; *Stamster* 1755 Roy (37-3).

4. Stemster, S, ND 336 505, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Stemmistar* 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Stanbuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Stambustar*, *Stambuster* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Stambustar* 1565 RMS (IV, 1669); *Stambuster* 1581 RMS (V, 277); *Scambuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Stambuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Stambuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Stamistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Stambuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Stambuster* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Stemster* 1755 Roy (38-1); *Stempster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Stemster* 1832 Thomson; [*stemstār*] 1985 Waugh (p. 412).

5. Stemster, S, ND 186 448, Parish of Latheron, Caithness.

*Stambuster* 1608 RMS (VI, 2155); *Stamistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Stamister* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Stemster* 1832 Thomson.

6. Stemster, S, ND 175 626, Parish of Bower, Caithness.

*Stamster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); *Stanstel* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Scambuster* 1671 Retours (Cai., 28); *Stamster* 1755 Roy (32-2); *Stemster* 1832 Thomson.

7. Stemster, S, ND 367 720, Parish of Canisbay, Caithness.

*Stamster* 1606 Sinclair (Mey); *Stamister* 1632 Sinclair (Mey); *Stemster* 1635 Sinclair (Mey); *Staymster* 1655 Sinclair (Mey); *Steymster* 1682 Sutherland (Forse); *Stempster* 1755 Roy (38-3); *Stempster* 1779 Sinclair (Freswick); *Stamster* 1784 Sinclair (Freswick); *Stemster* 1832 Thomson; [*stemstār*] 1985 Waugh (p. 310).

The specific is ON *steinn*, m., ‘a stone’ (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 86; Maceacharna 1976, p. 86; Waugh pp. 86, 311, 412). The later forms of no. 1, *Stanepoll*, seem to reflect a genitive pl. However, judging from the earliest reference, medial /-a-/ could be a svarabhakti vowel (cf. principle described in Borgström 1940, § 298, pp. 213-4). All the other recorded names with ON *steinn*, m., as specific seem to be in the stem form. What type of stone is referred to here is not entirely clear. Marwick argues that the reference of the Orkney example is to the standing stone situated on the farm’s land. Waugh has also argued for the same meaning with at least some of the Caithness examples.

No. 1, *Stanepoll*, is no longer in use as a place-name. In fact, it has been out of use so long that the exact situation of the settlement the name refers to is uncertain. Maceacharna (1976, p. 86) thinks it is the former name of *Ballemartin*, in the Parish of Kilarrow and Kilmeny.

All the examples, bar *Stanepoll*, have present reflexes with [-m-] for original [-n-] because of influence of the following labial, [b], which has now been dropped in the Caithness examples (Waugh 1985, Appendix, Marwick 1995, p. 36).

**STEMBISTER** see s.n. STANEPOLL

**STEMSTER** see s.n. STANEPOLL

### **STROUPSTER**

Stroupster, S, ND 332 663, Parish of Canisbay, Caithness.

*Strowbister* 1635 RMS (IX, 295); *Stronbister* 1653 Retours (Cai., 23); *Strunbuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Stroubster* 1801 Sinclair (Freswick); *Strubster* 1832 Thomson; *Strubster* 1832 Thomson; [*strupstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 311).

Waugh (1985, p. 311) has interpreted the specific as possibly being ON *stórr*, adj., 'large, great'. This suggestion is not entirely unproblematic, as the normal word for 'large, great' in the Viking Age is *mikill* (cf. SSNNW, p. 189).

The present pronunciation is the result of the following changes: ON [o:] has become Cai. [u] (Waugh 1985, Appendix) and subsequently metathesised with [r] (Seip 1955, p. 295; Waugh 1985, Appendix). According to Waugh, *r*-metathesis is very common in Caithness.

### **SUINSIBOST**

Suinsibost †, S, NL 56 82, Mingulay, Parish of Barra, Inverness-shire.

[*su:insibost*] 1902-04 McDonald.

It would be tempting to interpret the specific as the genitive sg. of the Norse personal name *Sveinn*, m., (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 993-6) with a connecting vowel having been inserted between the specific and generic at a later date. However, owing to the lack of early documentary evidence, this possibility cannot be further ascertained.

Although McDonald published his list of non-Gaelic place-names in Mingulay as late as 1902-4, it has proved difficult to establish its exact location (cf. Stahl 1999, p 375).

The pronunciation stated by McDonald has been converted to suit the system used in this book.

### **SWANBISTER**

Swanbister, S, HY 350 056, Parish of Orphir, Orkney.

*Swanbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 39); *Swanbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 40); *Swanbuster* 1500 OR; *Swanbuster* 1503 REO (p. 414); *Swanbuster* 1574 REO (p. 149); *Swanbuster* 1595 OR; *Suanbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Swanbuster* 1615 DOH (I, p. 235); *Swanbister* 1615 DOH (I, p. 237); *Swainbister* 1620 DOH (III, p. 85); *Swainbuster* 1642 RMS (IX, 1148);



*Swambuster* 1643 Retours (O&S, 36); *Suambuster* 1657 Retours (O&S, 82); *Swambister* 1661 Retours (O&S, 89); *Swanbuster* 1687 Commis. Rec. (OLM 2, p. 174); *Swanbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

Marwick (1952, p. 107) interprets the specific as probably being the ON personal name *Sveinn*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 993-6). However, the absence of a genitive -s marker makes this unlikely. Owing to its rarity, it is not likely either that the specific should be the derived personal name *Sveini*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 991). Other names in Swan- in Orkney may contain ON *svín*, n., 'a pig' (cp. *Swandale* ['swandəl], Swindale 1595 OR, Parish of Rousay (Marwick 1952, p. 65)). It is problematic, though, that even as early as over a hundred years prior to the 1595 Swindale form of *Swandale*, *Swanbister* exclusively has forms with /a/. The only remaining possibility I see is ON *svanr*, m., 'a swan'.

### SWANIBOST

Swanibost, S, NB 511 625, Barvas Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

[*Sunebost Dall* 1662 Blaeu (131-2)]; *Swanibust* 1776 Mackenzie; *Swanibust* 1794 Huddart; *Swanibust* 1804 Heather; *Swanibost* 1832 Thomson]; [*suanjəbɔst*] 1954 Oftedal (p. 377).

The specific has been interpreted as the rare ON personal name *Sveini*, m. (cf. Capt. Thomas 1876, p. 480; Oftedal 1954, p. 377). However, Oftedal has pointed out that there is a discrepancy in the pronunciation of [*suanjəbɔst*] with that of the surname, *Macqueen* [*mahk'suənj*], which is formed from the strong declension variant ON *Sveinn*, m., so that this interpretation is not satisfactory. A cautious interpretation of the specific might instead be the genitive pl. of ON *svanr*, m., 'a swan', but this is little more certain than Oftedal's suggestion.

### SYMBISTER see s.n. SIMBISTER

### THRUMSTER

Thrumster, S, ND 336 453, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Thrumbuster* 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Trubbunster-Litill* 1545 RMS (III, 3164); *Thrombuster* 1545 RMS (III, 3165); *Thrumbuster* 1546 Sinclair (Mey); *Thrumbuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Thrumbuster* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Thornbuster* ? RSS 1566 (V, 3034); *Thrumbuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Thrumbuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Thrumbuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Thrumster-Lyttill*, *Thrumstir-Meikill* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Thrumbuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Thrumster-Littill*, *Thrumster-Mekill* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Thumbuster* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22);

*Thumbustar*, *Thembuster*, *Thirmbuster*, *Little Thumbbister* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *N. Trumbuster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *O. Trumbuster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Thrumster* 1726 Macfarlane (I, 157); *Thrumster* 1726 Macfarlane (I, 160); *Thrumbster* 1750 Dorret; *Thrumster* 1755 Roy (38-1); *Thrumster* 1832 Thomson; [*þramstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 311).

The specific is possibly ON *þruma*, f., 'land, soil' (cf. Waugh 1985, p. 416), and may refer to the quality of the land.

## TISTER

Tister, S, ND 192 615, Parish of Bower, Caithness.

*Tubister* 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Tusbuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Tusbuster* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Tusbister* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Thusbuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Tusbuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Tisbistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Thusbuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Tusbister* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Thusbuster* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Tuspuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Westir Thispister* 1667 RMS (XI, 1070); *Tuspuster* 1671 Retours (Cai., 28); *Tister* 1750 Dorret; *Tester* 1755 Roy (38-3); *Tister* 1832 Thomson.

Despite this name's being well documented, the specific is too obscure to be properly interpreted.

## TITULBUSTER

Titulbuster †, S, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Titulbustir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Titulbistar* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Titulbuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53).

The specific can hardly be the ON personal name *Títólfr*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 1030), as the genitive marker is lacking. Furthermore, this name is very rare, which reinforces the improbability of this suggestion. No other ON word or name is readily identifiable with the source forms. Hence the interpretation of the specific must remain open.

## TORRABOLS, TORRABUS

1. Torrabolts †, S, Oa, Parish of Kildalton & Oa, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Tornobelsay* 1562 RSS (V, 1112); *Tornobolsay* 1563 RSS (V, 1259); *Tornobolse* 1584 RSS (VIII, 1743).

2. Torrabus, S, NR 423 704, Kilmeny, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

*Terrabolls* 1499 ALI (A58, p. 231); *Torabus* 1751 McDougall.

3. Torrabus †, S, Kildalton, Parish of Kilarrow & Kilmeny, Islay, Argyllshire.

The specific of these names has been interpreted in numerous ways, from containing an ON personal name *Pórir*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 1180-2), to *torfa*, f., 'turf, peat' and ON *torg*, n., 'a square, a market-place' (cf. Capt. Thomas 1882, pp. 256-7; Gillies 1906, p. 241; Maceacharna 1976, p. 86). Unfortunately, neither of these suggestions seems to be correct. There is no vestige of a genitive -s in any of the present forms or sources, which renders a personal name unlikely. Secondly, the earliest piece of documentation has the form *Torno-*, which easily eliminates all the suggestions made. With this source form in mind, the specific can only really be ON *þorn*, m., 'a thorn' or 'a thorn-bush'. This is certainly the case for no. 1, but probably also for the other place-names. The medial /-o-/ is either the vestige of an inflectional marker or a svarabhakti vowel.

No. 1 cannot be located any closer than to Oa, as it is no longer in use.<sup>86</sup> The same is the case for no. 3, which has only been recorded by Capt. Thomas. According to him, it is situated in Kildalton.

**TORRABUS** see s.n. **TORRABOLS**

**TREBISTER** see s.n. **OUTRABISTER**

### **TUSKERBISTER**

Tuskerbister, S, HY 354 097, Parish of Orphir, Orkney.

*Enstarbuster* ? 1492 HSRO (p. 39); *Tuskarbuster*, *Tuskarbuster* 1500 OR; *Tuskerbuster* 1503 REO (p. 414); *Tusbister* 1612 OrkTes (no. 36); *Tuskbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Tuskibuster* 1614 OR; *Tuskebuster* 1619 DOH (III, p. 72); *Tuskebuster* 1620 DOH (III, p. 85); *Tuskebuster* 1642 OR; *Tusbuster*, *Tuskebuster* 1657 Retours (O&S, 82); *Tuskibuster* 1687 Commis. Rec. (OLM 2, p. 175); *Tusterbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

The specific has been interpreted by Marwick (1952, p. 107) as ON *torfskeri*, m./Ork. *tuskar*, sb., 'a peat-cutting implement', used as a by-name. Marwick is aware that his suggestion is problematic as he notes: "In combination with *bólstaðr* such a prefix has presumably been a personal name, but there seems to be no record of its being so used in Norway or elsewhere". Considering the lack of other instances in which *\*Torfskeri*, m./ *\*Tusker*, sb., has been used as a personal name, together with the rari-

86. Maceacharna (1976, p. 85) lists an otherwise unrecorded 'Tosabus' as being situated near Ballyvicar in Oa, itself situated at NR 343 467. Since the situation of this name is quite close to where the sources would locate Torrabols, it is possible that these two names are one and the same.

ty with which personal names occur in *bólstaðr*-names, this suggestion seems rather unlikely. It is altogether more probable that the specific has been assimilated in sound to Ork. *tuskar*, thus rendering the origin of the specific completely obscure. The generic probably originates from ON *bólstaðr*, m.

The 1492 form is erroneous.

## ULBSTER

1. Ulbster, S, ND 325 410, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Ulbister* 1538 RMS (III, 1798); *Ulbister* 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Ulbuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Wlbustar* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Ulbister* 1587 RMS (V, 1341); *Ulbuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Ulbuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Ulbuster* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Ulbister* 1612 RMS (VII, 766); *Ulbuster* 1614 Retours (Cai., 8); *Ulbuster* 1616 RMS (VII, 1440); *Ulbistir* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Ulbuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Ulbister* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Ulbister* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2207); *Ulbuster*, *Wolbuster* 1640 Retours (Cai., 20); *Ulbester* 1644 Retours (Cai., 22); *Ulbister*, *Ulbuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Ulbuster* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Ulbster* 1680 Retours (Cai., 33); *Ulbster* 1726 Macfarlane (I, 157); *Ulbster* 1750 Dorret; *Ulbster* 1755 Roy (38-1); *Ulbster* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Ulbster* 1832 Thomson; [*albstær*] 1985 Waugh (p. 418).

2. Ulbster, S, NC 961 184, Parish of Clyne, Sutherland.

*Ulbister* 1548 RMS (IV, 241); *Ulbister* 1564 RSS (V, 1704); *Ulbister* 1566 RSS (V, 2718); *Ulbister* 1577 RSS (VII, 1055).

Waugh (1985, p. 418) has interpreted the specific of the Caithness example as the ON personal name *Úlfr*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 1054-5), but there is no genitive marker to indicate so. Of other possibilities, the ON god *Ullr*, m., can hardly be the origin either, as there are no references to heathen cultic practice in the Scottish *bólstaðr*-place-name material. The only plausible alternative is ON *ulfr*, m., 'a wolf', which is often found in Norwegian place-names. Cf. e.g. NG 4.2, p. 132, *Ulberg*, *Ulvæbærgh* 1370 DN (II, 318); *Wlberg* 1469 DN (II, 652), which has undergone the same reduction in the specific.

This name occurs twice – once in Caithness and once in Sutherland. As noted above s.n. *Scarabus*, it is remarkable that Sutherland, having only two names which ultimately originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m., has names which are exactly parallel to two of the more unusual Caithness *bólstaðr*-names, namely *Scrabster* and *Ulbster*. It is, therefore, necessary to bear in mind that the Sutherland examples may be analogical formations.

### \*UNABUST

\*Unabust, S, NC 995 645, Parish of Reay, Caithness.

*Achunabust* 1876 OS1; [*aχ'anəbast*] 1985 Waugh (p. 58).

This place-name is a formally secondary formation, the specific of which is a lost place-name, \**Unabust*, itself probably from ON *bólstaðr*, m. The *Una-* element has been interpreted by Waugh (1985, pp. 58-9) as the ON personal name *Uni*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 1059-69).<sup>87</sup> Another possibility could be ON *undir*, adv., 'under, below', also found in the place-name *Nedrabister* in Shetland (see above). Nonetheless, the documentation of this name is so scanty that neither suggestion can be proven with any reasonable degree of certainty.

### UTRABISTER see s.n. OUTRABISTER

### WADBISTER

1. Wadbister, S, HU 516 394, Bressay, Shetland.

*Watbustair* 1577 OpprOS (SA); *Wodbustay* 1578-9 SheDoc2 (260); *Wodbustay* 1599 SheDoc (280); *Wodbuseay* 1604 SheDoc (377); *Wadbister* 1692 Retours (O&S, 142); *Wadbister* 1693 Retours (O&S, 143); [*wadbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 58).

2. Wadbister, S, HU 435 495, Tingwall, Parish of Tingwall, Shetland.

*Vesbisster*, *Wesbuster* ? (c. 1507x1513) SheDoc2 (app. 1 (ff. 1r., 6v.)); *Wadbister* 1565 SheDoc2 (145); *Westbister* ? 1570 SheDoc2 (185); *Wadbuster* 1587 SheDoc (99); *Wadbister* 1591 SheDoc (189); *Wadbuster* 1595-6 SheDoc (242); *Wodbester* 1600 RMS (VI, 1081); *Wodbuster* 1600 RMS (VI, 1083); *Wodbuster* 1635 RegTes (SA); *Wadbister* 1692 Retours (O&S, 142); *Wedbuster* 1716 ROZ (SA); *Wodbister* 1878 OS1; [*wadbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 57).

3. Wadbister †, S, HP 560 016, Unst, Shetland.

*Watbustare* 1577 SheDoc2 (237); *Wodbustay* 1579 RMS (IV, 2850); *Wadbister* 1589 SheDoc (156); *Wodbuster* 1624 DOH (II, p. 56); *Wedbuster* 1716 ROZ (SA); [*wadbəstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 54).

4. Wadbister, S, HU 395 464, Whiteness, Parish of Tingwall, Shetland.

*Wadbusta* 1525 SheDoc2 (47); *Wodbester* 1598 SheDoc (267); *Wedbuster* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038); *Wodbuster* 1602 SheDoc (335); *Wodbuster* 1610

87. Waugh also lists another interpretation of the name: Gaelic *achadh* 'a meadow, a field, a small farm' + Gaelic *na* (= def. art.) + ON *bólstaðr*. However, she herself objects to this interpretation for various reasons (cf. 1985, p. 58). Therefore, it has not been included here.

SheDoc (508); *Wodbuster* 1634 Retours (O&S, 21); *Wadbuster*, *Wadbustar* 1716 ROZ (SA); *Wadbister* 1878 OS1; [*wadbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 57).

The specific may formally be either ON *vatn*, n., 'water, a lake', or ON *vað*, n., 'a ford, a wading-place' (cf. Stewart 1987, pp. 54, 57, 58). Both suggestions are possible from a topographical point of view with the settlements of nos 2 & 4, which are situated near both a lake and a stream. However, only the stream running past no. 2 seems to have been large enough to have necessitated a wading-place. Nos 1 & 3, however, are only situated near a lake. Therefore, ON *vatn*, n., 'water, a lake', is really the only possibility. The same appellative has been used in combination with *bólstaðr*-names in Orkney as well, albeit in the genitive sg. (see Wasbister, below).

Why the zero-form has become standard here instead of the genitive sg. form as in Orkney can only be surmised. For some reason the zero-form must have become the standard one in the onomastic vocabulary in Shetland early on. If the earliest source forms of no. 2 are to be trusted, the zero-form appearance of these place-names might to some extent be the result of a late levelling of *Was*- and *Wad*- forms under the zero-form. The (c. 1507x1513) source forms in *Ves*-/*Wes*- may, however, instead owe their written form to the immediately preceding name *Vatster*, which is written *Vessetter* and *Vassater* in this document.

In Unst (no. 3), *Wadbister* has been renamed *Belmont*. However, the old settlement name is reflected in the formally secondary name *Wadbister Ness*.

The original consonant cluster, [-*tnb*-], has been reduced by dropping the middle consonant, [-*tb*-] (Seip 1955, p. 155). Later the [t] has been voiced to [d] (cp. principle described in Jakobsen 1928, p. LV).

## WARBISTER

1. Warbister †, S, HY 23 03, Parish of Hoy & Graemsay, Orkney. *Werbuster* *beneth the hill* 1503 REO (p. 413); *Warbister* 1575 RMS (IV, 2472); *Warbuster* 1618 DOH (III, p. 25); *Warbister* 1627 OR; *Wartbuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Warbuster* 1739 OR.

2. Warbister, S, HY 43 09, Parish of Kirkwall & St. Ola, Orkney. *Warbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 32); *Warbustare* 1500 OR; *Warbuster* 1595 OR; *Warbuster* 1684 Retours (O&S, 136).

3. \*Warbister, R, ND 387 841, Island of Swona, Parish of South Ronaldsay, Orkney.

The specific is ON *varða*, f., 'a ward, a pyramid-shaped or conical stone heap erected to serve as a marker' (cf. Marwick 1952, pp. 100, 179).

However, in the case of no. 1 the specific may rather be a place-name (of the same origin), \**Varða*, f., now *Ward Hill*, rising steeply behind where *Warbister* used to be (Marwick 1952, p. 179). In the case of no. 2, Marwick notes that there is no known beacon in the vicinity, but this is of little relevance to the interpretation of this name, as *varða* can really refer to any marker. No. 3 is now only reflected in the formally secondary name *Warbister Hill*.

When compounded, ON *varða*, f., is usually found in the stem form (cp. ON *varðhald*, n., 'a watch, a guard, a surveillance, a jail'). The middle [-ð-] in the triconsonantal cluster, [-rðb-], has been dropped (cf. principle described in Seip 1955, p. 155).

### WASBIST, WASBISTER, WASBUSTER, WESTER

1. Wasbist †, S, HY 48 42, Parish of Westray, Orkney.  
*Wasbustar* 1492 HSRO (p. 61); *Wasbustar* 1500 OR; *Wosbustar* 1595 OR; *Westbuster* 1610 RMS (VII, 343); [*wazbæst*] 1952 Marwick (p. 38).

2. Wasbister, S, HY 395 328, Rousay Parish, Orkney.  
*Wasbustar*, *Wosbustar*, *Wosbuster* 1595 OR; *Westbister*, *Westbuster* 1609 RMS (VII, 159); *Wosbuster* 1619 DOH (III, p. 63); *Wosbuster* 1644 Retours (O&S, 45); *Wobuster* 1657 Retours (O&S, 85); [*Wasbuster L.* 1662 Blaeu (133-4)]; *Wosbuster* 1670 Retours (O&S, 101); *Wasbuster* 1776 Mackenzie; [*wazbæstər*], [*wæzdər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 66).

3. Wasbuster, S, HY 274 145, Sandwick Parish, Orkney.  
*Westbuster* 1492 HSRO (p. 55); *Wasbustar* 1500 OR; *Westbyster* 1555-6 REO (p. 256); *Worbuster* ? 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Westbuster* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2244); *Vosbuster* 1643 Retours (O&S, 36); *Wosbuster* 1644 Retours (O&S, 44); [*wazbæstər*] 1952 Marwick (p. 157).

4. Wester, S, ND 231 727, Parish of Dunnet, Caithness.  
*Wesbuster* 1546 Sinclair (Mey); *Wesbuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Westbuster* 1553 RMS (IV, 745); *Half-Waster*, *Wastbuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Westpuster* 1632 Sinclair (Mey); *Wester Wgister* ? 1636 RMS (IX, 493); *Wester*, *Westbuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Westre* 1662 Blaeu; *Wester* 1807 Arrowsmith; *Wester* 1832 Thomson; [*wæstər*] 1985 Waugh (p. 260).

5. Wester †, S, ND 32 58, Parish of Wick, Caithness.  
*Wasbister* 1538 RMS (III, 1798); *Wesbister* 1545 RMS (III, 3164); *Westbuster* 1545 RMS (III, 3165); *Wesbuster* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Westbuster* RSS 1566 (V, 3034); *Wesbister* 1587 RMS (V, 1341); *Westbuster* 1604 Retours (Cai., 5); *Westbuster* 1605 Retours (Cai., 7); *Wesbister* 1612 RMS (VII, 766); *Wester* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Wastbuster* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Woster* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Westbister* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2207);

*Westbustar* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Westre* 1662 Blaeu; *Waster* 1667 RMS (XI, 1070); [*Loch of Wester* 1726 Macfarlane (I, 161)]; [*westar*] 1985 Waugh (p. 419).

The specific is ON *vatz* (< *vatns*), genitive sg. of ON *vatn*, n., 'water, a lake' (cf. Marwick 1952, pp. 38, 66, 157; Waugh 1985, pp. (229), 260, 419-20). Waugh also suggests that the specific may be ON *vestr*, adv., 'west,' for nos 4 and 5. However, the earliest forms of both place-names seem to contain ON *vatz* rather than ON *vestr*. Furthermore, the place-names refer to sites near lakes.

The specific has undergone the following developments: The [t] in the cluster [-tzb-] has been dropped. This loss is typical for the combination [-ts] + consonant and would presumably also be applicable here (Seip, 1955, p. 166). The modern pronunciation of nos 4 and 5 are owing to their confusion with Scots *waster/wester*, comp. adj., 'lying towards the west'.

The settlements of nos 1 and 5 are now lost, and their names are only reflected in the topography as *Skerry of Wastbist*, *Loch of Wester*, and *Hill of Wester*, etc.

#### **WASBISTER see s.n. WASBIST**

#### **WASBISTER**

1. Wasbister, S, ND 444 901, Parish of South Ronaldsay, Orkney.
2. Wasbister, S, ND 310 896, Parish of Walls & Flotta, Orkney.

The specific is most likely ON *vestr*, adv., 'west', in spite of the modern form taken. There is no large body of water in the vicinity, so ON *vatz*, gen. sg. of ON *vatn*, n., 'water as element', is not possible. No. 1 is situated west of *Isbister* and *Midbister*, South Ronaldsay, and the specific must originally have been bestowed in reciprocation with the specifics of the said names. No. 2 is situated west of *Eastbister*, Walls & Flotta, and must also be regarded as containing a reciprocating specific.

#### **WASBUSTER see s.n. WASBIST**

#### **WESTER see s.n. WASBIST**

#### **WESTERBISTER**

Westerbister, S, HY 460 024, Holm Parish, Orkney.

*Wusbuster* 1482-3 REO (p. 194); *Wusbustyr* 1482-3 REO (p. 195); *Westirbistir* 1492 HSRO (p. 48); *Westirbustir* 1492 HSRO (p. 49); *Westerbustir*



HSRO (p. 50); *Westerbustar* 1500 OR; *Westerbuster* 1552-3 REO (p. 247); *Westerbustar* 1595 OR; *Westerbuster* 1595 OR; *Westerbuster* 1614 RMS (VII, 1119); *Westbuster* 1633 RMS (VIII, 2244); *Wasterbister* 1641 Retours (O&S, 31); *Westerbuster* 1776 Mackenzie.

According to Marwick (1952, p. 94) the specific is ON *vestr*, adv., 'west'. However, judging from the written forms the comparative adj. *vestri*, 'wester' seems more plausible. The specific is in reciprocation to that of the nearby farm of *Easterbister* (see above).

The 1482-3 forms are erroneous

#### 4.4. Dating the Scottish *bólstaðr* place-name material

Owing to the fact that this place-name-type is only used for settlement-names, the earliest possible date at which it can have become current in this area is the time when Scandinavian settlement in this area began. In Ch. 1.4., above, this was assumed to be from about the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Since it will be shown in Ch. 6. that place-names of this type are typically secondary settlements, their earliest application in this area is possibly to be pushed towards the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. In the case of Caithness, which was conquered and subsequently colonised in the last decade of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the establishment of settlements with names in *bólstaðr* would probably not have occurred until some time in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

How long this place-name element continued to have relevance in naming situations is harder to establish. Because the documentary evidence is so late, it is difficult to establish a latest possible date of coinage on the basis of linguistic evidence. However, if the word-stock can be taken to signal cultural and religious aspects of the settlers' lives, it is interesting that there is not a single certain reference to pagan Norse activity. On the contrary, words with a Christian significance, such as *kirkja*, f., 'a church', and *kross*, n., 'a cross', abound. When was Christianity introduced into the areas of Scandinavian settlement? According to tradition, the Norwegian King Olaf Tryggvason forced the Scandinavian colonies to accept Christianity in 997 AD, but these areas must by and large already have been converted by then, so this date should not be taken as firm evidence. For instance, some of the original settlers of Iceland who came from the Hebrides were allegedly Christian, and since the original settlement-phase in Iceland extended from c. 870-930, Christianity seems to have been well-established, if not universal, from an early date in the Scandinavian communities in Scotland. Norway became Christian some time during the

11<sup>th</sup> century, and it cannot be assumed that the colonies were converted later than this.

The early introduction of Christianity to the Scottish areas of Scandinavian influence can, therefore, not be used as a *terminus ante qvem* in any way. If we utilise what historical information there is about the Scandinavian presence in Scotland, there is tangible evidence that the southern Hebrides became heavily gaelicised in the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Gaelic influence seems to have been strong in this area from a very early date, since it had often been under Hiberno-Scandinavian or Manx-Scandinavian rule from as early as the late 9<sup>th</sup> century. It may be that the southern Hebrides by and large ceased to be Scandinavian-speaking in the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. If this is the case, a cautious *terminus ante qvem* may be fixed at this date, as this place-name element did not survive as an active onomastic entity in Gaelic.

The Scottish King ousted the Orkney Earls from the mainland in 1202, and the Hebrides and Man were ceded to the Scottish throne in 1265. From these dates it must be assumed that Scandinavian culture and language came under heavy pressure from Gaelic, and any coinages in *bólstaðr* in these areas later than the middle and late 13<sup>th</sup> century would appear to be highly unlikely. The fact that there are no Gaelic words used in composition with *bólstaðr*, apart from loan words pertaining to Christianity, strongly suggests that this place-name element had ceased to be relevant even before these dates, possibly by as much as a century or so.

The Northern Isles remained under Scandinavian control far longer than did the Hebrides and Caithness, and in theory the use of this place-name element may have continued well into the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, since the *bólstaðr* material in these areas does not distinguish itself in any way from that of the Hebrides and Caithness, it is not likely to have been actively used in the Northern Isles any later than in the Hebrides and Caithness.

The Scottish *bólstaðr* place-name material does not allow for an exact dating. Where the *terminus post qvem* is relatively easily established – from the late 9<sup>th</sup> century for the islands under Scandinavian control and the early 10<sup>th</sup> century for Caithness and Sutherland – the *terminus ante qvem* is much harder to establish. However, owing to the fact that there is no marked difference in the place-name material from region to region, it must be assumed that the place-name element ceased to be active in all areas at about the same time. A cautious *terminus ante qvem* might be the late 12<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but it is absolutely impossible to ascertain this.

## 5. Icelandic and Faroese place-names in *bólstaðr*

### 5.1. The element *-bólstaðr* in Iceland and the Faroes

#### Geography

Iceland is situated on the border between the Atlantic Ocean and the Arctic Sea, some 900 km west of Norway and 800 km north-west of Scotland. To the west, it is 300 km to Greenland. In spite of being situated so close to the Arctic – the northernmost points of the country lying near the Arctic Circle – Iceland is mainly European in climate and natural life.

The geology of Iceland is by far the youngest found in the areas under consideration. Like the Faroe Islands, it consists mostly of different types of very young – only some 14-18 million years old – basalt, since it is situated on the Wyville Thomson ridge. There is immense geological activity in the country, as evidenced in frequent volcanic eruptions, numerous slumbering active volcanoes and hot springs. The frequent volcanic eruptions have caused the interior of Iceland to consist of a desert with dunes of black, volcanic shifting-sand and of great lava fields. There is hardly any plant growth in the interior of the country and the land is subject to the disintegrating mechanisms of wind and frost. Therefore, considerable amounts of material are eroded each year. Most of this is deposited in large sand deltas. Since most of the glaciers terminate to the south, the sand deltas have transformed almost the entire south coast into a large low-water coastline with broad sandy beaches. The rest of the Icelandic coast is mostly rocky, with steep or vertical rock faces, often intersected by fiords and bays.

The numerous fiords and bays have been created by Ice Age glaciation and ensuing melt water and river erosion. There is a fair morainic layer on the banks and on the valley sides as a result of the erosion of the interior. This means that the best soil is found in the fiord regions. Therefore, the majority of the Icelandic farms are situated on the valley sides. Pre-industrial Iceland was a decidedly fiord-economy, with reliance on both agriculture – mostly extensive farming – and on the harvest of the sea.

The Icelandic climate is wet, with mild winters and cool summers. This climate is best suited for grass vegetation, so that extensive farming pre-

vails, typically sheep and a fair amount of cattle. There is very little arable land today, only about 1,000 square kilometres. Present climatic and agricultural conditions are, however, quite different from those in the original *landnám* period. The climate was much milder around the turn of the first millennium. Therefore, the arable land was much more extensive in those days. Grain crops like barley and oats were common. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, the climate deteriorated and the present, more extensive, agricultural structure was developed. Excessive sheep grazing has prevented trees from growing.

Like Iceland, the Faroe Islands are situated on the so-called Wyville Thomson ridge, the northern border of the Atlantic Ocean, some 300 km from their nearest neighbour, Shetland. The Faroe Islands consist of numerous islands. Many of these are uninhabited owing to their diminutive size and difficulty of access. Only a relatively small number of islands, eighteen in all, are inhabited today.

The Faroe underground is volcanic in origin. It consists almost entirely of different types of basalt. The present appearance of the Faroe landscape is a result of erosive factors such as Ice Age glaciation, melt water and sea waves. The highest surfaces constitute the traces of a Tertiary plateau. Towards the open sea, especially to the north and west, wave erosion has created steep, often vertical hillsides with surf niches and surf ports; in front of the steep hillsides stand detached rock needles – the so-called *Drangar*. On the south and south-east coast and in bays and fiords, the descent from the high plateau to sea level is less dramatic; many of the fiords are small glacial valleys.

During the Ice Age, the Faroes were covered by their own ice cap. When the ice cap retracted, a morainic layer was deposited on the valley floors and up the sides. This layer is usually not very thick and the quality of the soil is not particularly good either, as the lion's share of the eroded material has been deposited at sea. A carpet of green grass covers the thin soil layer. The quality of the soil in most places is such that extensive farming, such as grazing for sheep and cattle, is the only agricultural option, as the climate is not suitable for grain crops.

### Dissemination

The distribution of place-names in *bólstaðr* in Iceland is quite interesting. Of the twenty names which originate or possibly originate as names in *bólstaðr* I have been able to locate here, nineteen are found exclusively in the western and southern counties, or *syslu*. The sole remaining example

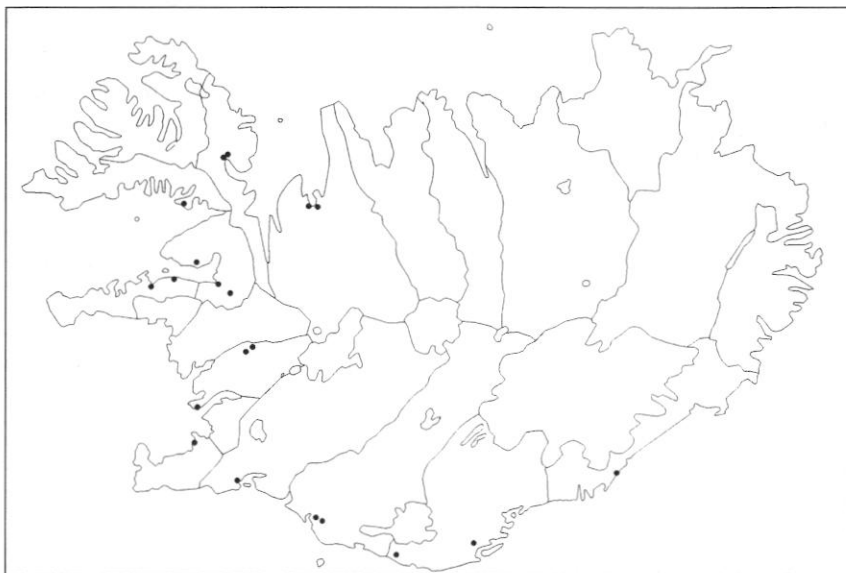


Fig. 4. The distribution of place-names in Old Norse *bólstaðr* in Iceland.

found in Austur-Skaftafellssýsla in the south-east of the country should most probably be seen as an extension of the southern distribution (see fig. 4). The distribution of names in the western and southern parts has the character of fairly evenly scattered dissemination.

The highest number of *bólstaðrs* in any county does not exceed three, and only in Dalasýsla and Borgarfjarðarsýsla do we find this many. In most of the western and southern counties, such as Húnavatnsýsla, Strandasýsla, Snæfellsnessýsla, Rangárvallasýsla and Vestur-Skaftafellssýsla, there are two examples of *bólstaðr* names, whereas Barðastrandarsýsla, Gulbringusýsla and Árnessýsla have only one each. Not all of the western counties, however, have names in *bólstaðr*. For instance, Isafjarðarsýsla, Hnappadalssýsla, Myrasýsla and Kjósarsýsla are not represented at all.

Owing to the fact that there are only two possible *bólstaðr* place-names in the Faroes, I do not find it necessary to discuss their distribution. Suffice it to say that the one locality, *Kirkja*, is situated on Fugloy in the northern part of the isles, whereas *Velbastaður* is situated in the central Faroes in the south of Streymoy.

## Previous Research

The treatment of ON *bólstaðr* in Iceland is meagre. One reason for this is that it has been perceived as an uncomplicated place-name element, because of its limited range of specifics.

The most important Icelandic contribution to the discussion of ON *bólstaðr* in Iceland is **Svavar Sigmundsson's** article 'Icelandic and Scottish place-names'.<sup>88</sup> Here the author notes that since *bólstaðr* is the most widespread Scandinavian place-name generic in Scotland, it is surprising that Icelandic place-names in *-bólstaður* are so few. There are only four simplex formations in *Bólstaður*, and twelve of the *Breiðabólstaður*-type. Twelve out of the 16 *bólstaður*-names are mentioned in medieval sources. In these sources they vary considerably in assessment, ranging from 12 to 60 'hundreds' – the local land-assessment unit.

Svavar finds that although it could be imagined that the compound-name *Breiðabólstaður*, meaning the 'broad farm', could have been invented in Iceland, it is more likely that the name-type came ready-made from the Scottish Isles. He states that this name-type occurs at least eight times in the Scotia Scandinavica area. This supposition is further strengthened by the fact that, as his map-evidence shows, there is a general correlation of the distribution of the name-type *Breiðabólstaður* with the areas typically inhabited by (Scandinavian) settlers from the British Isles. According to the *Landnámabók*, most of the settlers from the British Isles, or those who had connections with these, tended to settle in the southern and western parts of Iceland.

It is also stated that the farms of the *Breiðabólstaður*-type were probably settlements right from the beginning. The original settlers divided their lands among their families, relatives and followers and it is cautiously suggested that *Breiðabólstaður* as a type could correspond to the Norwegian *Miklabólstaðr*. He goes on to argue that the reason for the non-appearance of the *Miklabólstaður*-type in Iceland is most likely because *Breiðabólstaður* was more familiar to the settlers who had come directly from Scotland.

Svavar may have a point here, especially viewed in the light of the fact that place-names of the *Breiðabólstaður*-type are mainly situated in the

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88. Sigmundsson, Svavar, 'Icelandic and Scottish place-names', in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, August 4-11, 1996*, (Aberdeen, 1998), vol. II, pp. 330-42.

parts of Iceland where the Scoto-Scandinavian and Iro-Scandinavian settlers generally settled. However, more research will need to be done before any firm conclusions about this can be formed.

As is the case in Iceland, very little has been written on the place-name element *bólstaðr* in the Faroes, and this has to do with the fact that it is scarcely represented in the islands. **Christian Matras** has the following to say about ON *bólstaðr* in the Faroe Islands in *Nordisk Kultur v: Stedsnavn*:

It is even stranger that the larger islands, partly or completely, lack many of the place-name forming elements that we find in Orkney, Shetland and (partly) Iceland. I am here thinking of certain designations for *farm* or *settlement*. [...] of *-bólstaðr*, which forms part of a large number of farm names in Orkney and Shetland, as well as some Icelandic farm names, there are only weak traces in the Faroe Islands (\**Kirkjubólstaðr* as a designation for the township of *á Kirkju*, cf. Ork. Shetl. and Icel. *Kirkjubólstaðr*); otherwise, one *Bólstaður* is found as a topographical name on Nólsoy (meaning either 'the place where a shelter (*ból*) has stood' or 'resting-place for cattle' ...). [*my translation*]<sup>89</sup>

It is clear from Matras' concise account that there is very little *bólstaðr* material in the Faroe Islands, and indeed most of what has been said about ON *bólstaðr* is to be found in the analysis of the individual place-names.

However, one important article dealing with ON *bólstaðr* in the Faroe Islands has appeared. In 1986 **Lindsay Macgregor** published her 'Norse Naming Elements in Shetland and Faroe: A Comparative Study'.<sup>90</sup>

89. Olsen, Magnus (ed.), *Nordisk Kultur v: Stedsnavne*, (Stockholm, 1939), p. 57: "Mærkeligere er det, at de større øer mangler delvis eller helt mange af de stedsnavnedannende led, som vi finder på Orknøerne, Shetland og (delvis) på Island. Det er visse betegnelser for gård el. bebyggelse, jeg her tænker på ... *-bólstaðr*, der indgår i en masse orknøske og shetlandske og en del islandske gårdnavne, er der kun svage spor af på Færøerne (\**Kirkjubólstaðr* som betegnelse for bygden á Kirkju, jfr. orkn., shetl., isl. *Kirkjubólstaðr*); ellers findes *Bólstaður* som naturnavn på Nólsoy (bet. enten 'sted hvor en lygård (*ból*) har stået' el. 'hvileplads for kvæg')."

90. Macgregor, Lindsay, 'Norse Naming Elements in Shetland and Faroe: A Comparative Study', in *Northern Studies* 23, (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 84-101.

In this article, Macgregor finds that the presence of one type of generic in one area and its absence in another is not a result of spatial differences in settlement and usage of onomasticon but rather the result of different naming-traditions spurred by local conditions – natural as well as man-made. She has carried out an in-depth study of a number of place-name types in Shetland and the Faroe Islands. In this connection she has made a very detailed study of ON *bólstaðr* in Shetland and has come to the conclusion that the meaning of the element here corresponds to a ‘farm established on a cultivated field’. In other words, ON *bólstaðr* signifies a secondary settlement established as the result of internal expansion to nearby fields. However, this expansion was only one of several possibilities. Settlement could also take place at distant coastal sites and inland marginal sites. Therefore, the type of expansion itself became a distinguishing feature. The absence (or very nearly so) of ON *bólstaðr* in the Faroe Islands is put down to the fact that there was only one type of secondary expansion possible – the infield expansion. And even though ON *bólstaðr* would be a suitable place-name element to describe this type of secondary expansion, it did not make sense to add this generic because it would not serve any distinguishing function. The limited amount of available land in the Faroe Islands meant that the secondary settlements (Fær. *bylingar*) clustered around the primary settlement site in settled areas (Fær. *bygdir*).

With this article Macgregor focuses (very wisely) on the limitations of the argument that spatial distribution of certain generics in comparison with others can be used to construct chronologies. The reason for this is that, for instance, differences in the topography may necessitate differences in settlement patterns and naming patterns. Her analysis of *bólstaðr* is on the whole competent, although she expresses herself ambiguously on one point. By saying that ON *bólstaðr* may have been used as a field name but not have come into use until after settlement arose on the field must be seen as an instance of muddled thinking. If a place-name only comes into being after settlement has been established on a field, then the name cannot originally refer to a field-name. But apart from this lapse, it is an excellent article with a deep understanding of the North Atlantic naming-situation.

### **Phonetic developments**

It has not been possible to obtain any phonetic renderings of *bólstaðr*-names in Iceland. Compared with the rest of the Scandinavian languages, Icelandic is quite archaic. It has retained many of the features of the origi-



nal Old Norse language. However, some phonetic changes have occurred in Icelandic. Of greatest relevance to this present work is especially the development of a svarabhakti-vowel in the 13<sup>th</sup> century between a consonant and final -r (Skard 1973, p. 123). Hence the modern nominative singular spellings in *Bólstaðurl-bólstaður*, where ON would have had *Bólstaðrl-bólstaðr*.

I have chosen not to delve into the development of *bólstaðr* in the Faroes, as the possible examples which exist in these island are both too few in number and too uncertain to substantiate any elaboration on the Faroese phonetic development of this element. Instead, the development of the generic is treated separately in the Faroese place-name section (Ch. 5.3) below.

## 5.2. The Icelandic place-name material

### Simplex formations:

#### BÓLSTAÐUR

1. Bólstaður, S, Fljótshlíð, Rangárvallasýsla.  
*í Bolstad* c. 1390-1425 Ldn (LdnMb, 9).
2. Bólstaður, S, Helgafellssveit, Snæfellsnessýsla.  
*á Bólstað* c. 1700 Eb (p. 20); *Bólstadur* 1702 Jarðabók (V, p. 321).
3. Bólstaður, S, Kaldrananessókn, Strandasýsla.  
*Bólstadur* 1706 Jarðabók (vii, p. 380); *Bolstadur* 1733 IK (pl. 58); *Stadr* 1780 IK (pl. 67).
4. Bólstaður, S, Reynishverfi, Dyrhólahreppi, Vestur-Skaftafellssýsla.  
*Bólstaður* 1703 Jarðabók (xiii, p. 342).

The origin of these names is ON *bólstaðr*, m., 'a farm' (cf. Jónsson, *Bæjanqfn á Íslandi*, p. 450). The 1780 form of no. 3 is a result of confusion of this name with *Staður*, situated on the other side of Selströnd firth (see below).

### Compound formations:

#### BREIÐABÓLSTAÐIR, BREIÐABÓLSTAÐUR, STAÐUR

1. Breiðabólstaðir, S, Álfтанeshreppur, Gullbringusýsla.  
*Breidabolstadur* 1703 Jarðabók (iii, p. 215); *Bredebolstad* 1721-2 IK (pl. 47).
2. Breiðabólstaður, S, Qlfushreppur, Árnessýsla.

*Breidabólstadir* 1706 Jarðabók (ii, p. 439); *Breidaboellstader*, *Breida-boelstader* 1731 IK (pl. 53).

3. Breiðabólstaður, S, Borgarhafnarhreppur, Austur-Skaftasýsla.  
*a Breidabólstað* c. 1390-1425 Ldn (LdnHaukab, Ch. 270); *Breidebolstader* 1733 IK (pl. 59); [*Breidebolstaders lon* 1733 IK (pl. 59)]; [*Breidebostadertoon* 1734 IK (pl. 60)]; *Breidabool sta-dur*, [*Breidabol-stadur loon* 1761 IK (pl. 64)]; [*Brejdabolstadar Loon* c. 1770 IK (pl. 65)]; [*Breidabolstadar Loon* 1780 IK (pl. 67)].

4. Breiðabólstaður, S, Reykholtssalur, Borgarfjarðarsýsla.  
*a Breiða bolstað* c. 1302-1310 Ldn (LdnHauksb, Ch. 17); *á Breiðabólstað* c. 1700 Høens (Ch. 1); *Breidebolstadir* 1708 Jarðabók (iv, p. 229); *Brejdabolstað* 1723 IK (pl. 48).

5. Breiðabólstaður, S, Reykholtssalur, Borgarfjarðarsýsla.  
*á qðrum Breiðabólstað* c. 1700 Høens (Ch. 1); *Forne Breiðabólstadir*, *Litlu Breiðabolstader* 1708 Jarðabók (iv p. 230).

6. Breiðabólstaður, S, Fellstrandarhreppur, Dalasýsla.  
*i breida bolstað* 1378 DI (iii, nr. 277); *Breidebólstaður* 1703 Jarðabók (vi, p. 102); *Breide boelstað* 1725 IK (pl. 50).

7. Breiðabólstaður, S, Miðdalahreppur, Dalasýsla.  
*aa Breidabolstað* c. 1600-1700 Ldn (LdnSt, p. 158); *Breidebólstaður* 1703 Jarðabók (vi, p. 33); *Breidebolstað* 1725 IK (pl. 50).

8. Breiðabólstaður, S, Neðri Vatnsdalshreppur, Húnavatnssýsla.  
*a Breida-bolstað* c. 1350-1370 Stu (I, p. 31, l. 20); *á Breiðabólstað* c. 1700 Vatn (Ch. 39); *Breidabólstadir* 1703 Jarðabók; *Breidabolstadir* 1733 IK (pl. 57).

9. Breiðabólstaður, S, Vestara Hópshreppur, Húnavatnssýsla.  
*at Breidabolstað* c. 1302-1310 Kristni (LdnHauksb, Ch. 18); *aa Breiða-bolstað* c. 1350-1370 Stu (I, p. 319, l. 26); *Breiðabolst[ad]* 1353 DI (iii, nr. 30); *til Bræidabolstadar* 1386 DI (iii, nr. 335); *In breidabolstadha* 1423 DI (iv, nr. 365); *a Breiðabolstað* c. 1700 Ldn (LdnSk, p. 195); *Breidabolstadir* 1705 Jarðabók (viii, p. 257); *Breidebolstadir* 1733 IK (pl. 57); *Breidebolstadir* 1734 IK (pl. 60); *Breidabolstað-r* c. 1770 IK (pl. 65); *Breidabolstaðr* 1780 IK (pl. 67).

10. Breiðabólstaður, S, Fljótshlíð, Rangárvallasýsla.  
*a Breida bolstað* c. 1302-1310 Eir (LdnHauksb, Ch. 2); *aa Bræiða-bolstað* c. 1350-1370 Stu (I, p. 221); *Breidabolstað* c. 1390-1425 Ldn (LdnMb, Ch. 12); *ä Breidabolstað* 1447 DI (iv, nr. 736); *Breidabolstadar* c. 1550 IK (pl. 23); *Brandabol stader* 1595 IK (pl. 24); *Branda bol staa der* 1607 IK (pl. 25); *Branda bol stadar* 1616 IK (pl. 28);

*Breidabolst Stader* 1631 IK (pl. 28); *Brandabol Stader* 1631 IK (pl. 30); *Bredebol-stad* c. 1645 IK (pl. 38); *Breidabol Stader* 1668 IK (pl. 39); *Breidabóls-stadur* 1710 Jarðabók; *Breidaboelstader*, *Breidaboestader* 1731 IK (pl. 54); *Breidaboostadur* 1761 IK (pl. 64); *Breida-bol-stadr* 1733 IK (pl. 67).

11. Breiðabólstaður, S, Skógarstrandarhreppur, Snæfellsnessýsla.  
*aa Breidabolstad* c. 1302-1310 Ldn (LdnHauksb, Ch. 76); *á Breiðabólstað* c. 1700 Eb (p. 59); *Breide-bólstaður* 1702 Jarðabók (v, p. 337); *Breidebolstad* 1724 IK (pl. 44); *Bredeboelstad* 1728 IK (pl. 52); *Breidabóls-Stadur* 1761 IK (pl. 64); *Breida bolstadr* c. 1770 IK (pl. 65); *Breidabol-stadr* 1780 IK (pl. 67).

12. Breiðabólstaður, S, Kleifahreppur (á síðu), Vestur-Skaftafellssýsla.  
*Breidebolstader* 1733 IK (pl. 59).

13. Staður á Reykjanesi, S, Garpsdalssókn, Barðastrandarsýsla.  
*á Breiðabólstað* c. 1350-1370 Stu (II, p. 184); *aa Breidabolstad* c. 1400 GullP (Ch. 39); *Stadur* 1710 Jarðabók (vi, p. 206); *Stadur* 1742 IK (pl. 63).

14. Staður í Steingrímsfirði, S, Kaldrananessókn, Strandasýsla.  
*til Bræiða-bóls-staðar* c. 1350-1370 Stu (I, p. 141); *a Breida-bolstad* c. 1350-1370 Stu (I, p. 451); *Stadur* 1595 IK (pl. 24); *Stadur* 1607 IK (pl. 25); *Stadur* 1616 IK (pl. 28); *Stadur* 1668 IK (pl. 39); *Stadur* 1733 IK (pl. 58); *Breidebolstader* 1734 IK (pl. 60); *Stadur* 1742 IK (pl. 63); *Stadur* 1761 IK (pl. 64); *Breйдabolstadr* c. 1770 IK (pl. 65).

The first element is ON *breiðr*, adj., 'broad, wide' (cf. Jónsson, *Bæjanofn á Íslandi*, p. 450), and the second is ON *bólstaðr*, m. This construction is by far the most common *bólstaðr* name-type in Iceland. The exact reason for this is somewhat unclear, but the majority of place-names of this type are probably analogical formations, albeit they probably have a degree of factuality about them.

The present form of no. 1 shows a plural form. However, this seems to be a late change – probably on analogy of the numerous farms in *staðir*, m. pl., 'a farm' in Iceland. ON *bólstaðr* is occasionally found with plural forms (see e.g. *Bolstad*, Evanger sn., Hordaland fylke, Norway (no. 7)). The reason for this is not entirely clear. It may be owing to confusion with ON *staðir*, m. pl., 'a farm', or that the settlement area had been perceived as consisting of several farms.

Nos 13 & 14 represent reduced forms. Why this reduction has occurred is not clear. One possibility could be that other simplex *Staður*-names has caused the reduction by force of analogy. Their origins as *bólstaðr*-compound is clear enough, though.

## **BREIÐABÓLSTAÐUR** see s.n. **BREIÐABÓLSTAÐIR**

### **HQRÐUBÓL**

Hqrðuból, S, Miðdalahreppur, Dalasýsla.

á *Hqrðabólstað* c. 1330-1370 Laxd (Ch. 6); *Hörduból* 1703 Jarðabók (vii, 23); *Hórdeboel* 1725 IK (pl. 50).

The specific seems to be the genitive of the tribal name ON *Hqrðar*, m. pl., ‘men from Hordaland (Norway)’ (cf. Jónsson, *Bæjanqfn á Íslandi*, pp. 425; 450). The specific is possibly used here as a byname. The generic is probably ON *bólstaðr*, m. However, this origin is only indicated once in documentary evidence – all the other show ON *ból*, n.

### **KIRKJUBÓL**

Kirkjuból, S, Borgarfjörður, Borgarfjardarsýsla.

a *Kyrkiobólstað* c. 1700 Ldn (LdnSk, p. 17); *Kirkeboel* 1723 IK (pl. 48).

The specific is the genitive sg. of ON *kirkja*, f., ‘a church’. The generic is probably ON *bólstaðr*, m., as suggested by the earliest form (cf. Jónsson, *Bæjanqfn á Íslandi*, p. 450).

The 1723 form shows a reduced generic, possibly formed on analogy with the more common Icelandic place-name element *ból*, n.

## **STAÐUR** see s.n. **BREIÐABÓLSTAÐIR**

## 5.3. The Faroese place-name material

Owing to the very limited *bólstaðr* place-name-material found in the Faroe Islands, I have decided not to sub-section this sub-chapter.<sup>91</sup>

### **KIRKJA**

Kirkja, S, (29V) PK 391 127, Kirkju Bygð, Kirkjuhagi, Fugloy, Norðoya Sýsla.

*Kircke* 1600-1 jbr. (p. 9r); *Kierke* 1709-10 FK (pl. 14); *Kirke* 1795 FK (pl. 23).

The sources do not give any other impression than that this name is a simplex name in ON *kirkja*, f., ‘a church’. However, the locals sometimes

91. I am indebted to Dr. Poul Skårup of the University of Aarhus and Mag. Art. Eivind Weyhe, Føroyamálsdeildin, Fróðskaparsetur Føroya, Faroe Islands, for helpful comments and suggestions.

refer to it as *Kirkjubøstaður* (Cf. Hansen, J. Símun, *Tey byggja land. 1. partur – Fugloyar sókn*, (Klaksvík, 1971), p. 23.), pronounced [ˈtʰirtʃibøstæːvɪr] (cf. Matras 1932, p.15), as a designation used mostly by fishermen, but also in everyday speech. Both Matras and Hansen interpret *Kirkjubøstaður* as originating from an unrecorded *\*Kirkjubólstaðr*. Hansen even goes further to say that *Kirkja* has supplanted an original simplex *\*Bólstaður* – the local alternative being a ‘transition’ form. Both Hansen’s and Matras’ theories are interesting but not without problems. The form *Kirkjubøstaður* is not recorded in writing. For an unofficial version of a place-name to survive some four centuries or more would be truly remarkable, but this is what it would have to have done here because there are no written forms to support the theory of an original *bólstaðr*-name. Instead, the *-bøstaður*-element should possibly be seen as a paraphrasing epexegetic appellative. It is well known that fishermen in the North Atlantic region have traditionally had a special sea jargon for words (and occasionally also names) used on land. When fishing, words (and names) used on land were considered to be taboo and were paraphrased or replaced by a special word stock. In this respect, the form *Kirkjubøstaður* may be interpreted as a paraphrase of the bygd-name *Kirkja*, the epexegetic element having been employed in order to avoid bad luck. If this is the case, the form *Kirkjubøstaður* can only be regarded as secondary to *Kirkja*. In this respect, the present name of *Kirkja* can therefore hardly be considered an elliptical form of an original *\*Kirkjubólstaður*.

In every day speech, *Kirkja* is normally called *á Kirkju*.

## VELBASTAÐUR

Velbastaður, S, (29V) PJ 124 743, Velbastaður Bygð, Streymoyar Sýsla. *Valbystedt* 1584 jbr. (p. 55v); *walbøstedt* 1590 jbr. (p. 18r); *Valbested* 1601 jbr. (p. 24r); *paa Welbested* 1617 Tingb.; *Velberstat* c. 1650 FK (pl. 9); *Velberstat* 1673 FK (pl. 10); *Welber-stadt* 1684 FK (pl. 12); *Welbestad* 1709-10 FK (pl. 13); *Woleste, Velbers* ? 1734 FK (pl. 15); *Velbesta* c. 1770 FK (pl. 16); *Velbestad* 1770 FK (pl. 17); *Velbe stadt* c. 1784 FK (pl. 19); *Welbestad* c. 1780 FK (pl. 20); *Velbastea* 1784 FK (pl. 21 & 22); *Welbestad* 1806 FK (pl. 23).

There have been various suggestions as to the etymology of this name. Jakob Jakobsen (1909, pp. 74-5) interpreted it as a name in *staður* with a personal name (in the genitive singular) as the specific, such as *\*Vilbi* (< *\*Vilbjørn*) or *Valbi* (< *Valbjørn*). His reason for assuming that the specific was a personal name was that Icelandic place-names in *staðir*, m. pl., ‘a farm’, are typically compounded with such. However, Jakobsen did find

the present /-e-/ ([æ]) problematic, but he explained it as either a sporadic i-umlaut or as a vowel-dissimilation of an earlier \**Valbastaðr*.

This interpretation has later been opposed by Karl Gustav Ljunggren (1955 & 1957). Instead, he thinks this is a place-name in ON *bólstaðr*, m., compounded with ON *vé*, n., 'a holy place where sacrifices take place'. He supports his assumption by the fact that a parallel place-name is to be found at least once in Norway. Ljunggren has explained the development of *Velbastaður* from an original \**Vébólstaðr* by a series of phonetic changes, first a metathesis of [-l-] to \**Vélbostaðr*, and then a subsequent shortening of the mainstressed vowel from [-e:-] to [-e-]. This would result in the intermediate form, \**Velbostaðr*. Then [-o-] (having apparently been shortened at an earlier stage (not mentioned by Ljunggren)) would then shift to a more fronted and open [-a-] as is found today.

Ljunggren's interpretation of *Velbastaður* is not entirely unproblematic. The shift [-o-] to [-a-] cannot readily be accounted for on phonetic grounds. The sources do not show an /-a-/ until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Before then it is at first /-ø-/ , then /-e-/ , neither of which would normally represent [-a-]. Ljunggren's supposition does, however, find some support in the change of [-bø] to [-ba] as in e.g. *Sunnbø*, pronounced [*somba*]. But whether this change also takes place in medial position, and not only finally, I have been unable to ascertain. The *l*-metathesis does not appear to be entirely unproblematic either. This type of metathesis is well-known in Faroese, for instance interchanged with *r* as in ON *kringla* > Fær. *klingra*, or with *v* as in ON *tafl* > Fær. *talv*. Furthermore, a metathesis may take place with a consonant and its immediately preceding or following vowel. However, the metathesis described by Ljunggren is unattested in Faroese. The apparent *l*-metathesis in *Velbastaður* does not appear to have been an interchange of *l* with another consonant (such as in the metathesis of ON *kriŋgla* to Fær. *klingra*), and neither does it shift position with neither an immediately preceding or following consonant or vowel. For these reasons, Ljunggren's interpretation appears to be somewhat unsatisfactory.

On the other hand, it is difficult to see what the etymology of *Velbastaður* can be. Firstly, the written forms are rather late and, I suspect, possibly to some extent danicised or norwegianised. Therefore, it is impossible to say whether the earliest recorded forms actually convey the form of the name rightly. I am here thinking especially about the present vowels [e] (first written as /a/ as in 1584 *Valbystedt*) and [a] (variously written /y/ (1584 *Valbystedt*), /ø/ (1590 *walbøstedt*) and /e/ (1601 *Valbested*)) Obvious variations of this magnitude naturally make any interpretation tentative. Secondly, there is very little ON word-material in *velb-* or

*valb-*. On the face of it, Jakobsen's suggestion that the specific might be a hypocoristic personal name such as \**Vilbi* or \**Valbi* would appear to be the most likely. However, no such forms have ever been attested, so this interpretation is also somewhat uncertain. In conclusion, I see no other way out than to deem the etymology of this place-name uncertain.

#### 5.4. Dating the Icelandic and Faroese material

The date of coinage of place-names containing *bólstaðr* in Iceland has already been briefly touched upon. The original settlement phase is normally stated to be c. 870-930. This is the classical date given by early Icelandic historians. Substantial tephrochronological and archaeological research have recently confirmed that this time-span for initial settlement may well be correct.<sup>92</sup> Taking into account the fact that the application appears to have been to secondary settlements, also in Iceland, an earliest date of application may be said to be at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Where the *terminus post quem* is relatively easily fixed on archaeological and historical evidence grounds, the *terminus ante quem* is more difficult to establish. Icelandic is a very conservative language – the language is essentially the same now as it was at the time of the original *landnám*. This means that *bólstaðr* could theoretically have been used to form a genuine place-name almost to this very day. However, there are several reasons why they are most likely to be very old. Firstly, most place-names with *bólstaðr* as an element are already found in medieval sources, and all have at least been recorded by the year 1710. Svavar Sigmundsson mentions in 'Icelandic and Scottish place-names' that church-sites or chapel-sites have been found at nine localities with place-names of this type.<sup>93</sup> To Orri Vésteinsson, church-sites on farms are an indication that the farms themselves were established prior to the introduction of Christianity. The Christian faith became generally accepted in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>94</sup> If Orri Vésteinsson is right in his assumptions, then almost half of the place-

92. Vésteinsson, Orri, 'Patterns of settlement in Iceland: a study in prehistory', in *Saga Book*, vol. xxv, part 1, (London, 1998), pp. 2-4.

93. Sigmundsson, Svavar, 'Icelandic and Scottish place-names', in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, August 4-11, 1996*, (Aberdeen, 1998), vol. II, p. 331.

94. Vésteinsson, Orri, 'Patterns of settlement in Iceland: a study in prehistory', in *Saga Book*, vol. xxv, part 1, (London, 1998), pp. 21-3.

names here can be dated to before 1000. The majority of place-names with *bólstaðr* as an element may well have been coined before this date, but some may not have been coined until into the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

From this it is clear that the active time-span of this type of place-name was very limited. It seems that no more than 200 years at the most may separate the earliest coinage from the latest example, which means that names in *bólstaðr* were probably all coined in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

There are only three place-names in the Faroes that may be original *bólstaðr* names, namely *Bólstaður*, *Kirkja*, and *Velbastaður*. The first is a late, purely Faroese formation, not related as such to this element. The second place-name, *Kirkja*, has a local variant vernacular form that might be from *bólstaðr*, but there are serious doubts as to whether this form is actually the original one. The last name, *Velbastaður*, is the strongest Faroese contestant for being a place-name in ON *bólstaðr*, but even this one is doubtful. Furthermore, the localities these three place-names refer to are not typical for ON *bólstaðr*, and although this is not an absolute parameter, it strengthens the argument against these place-names' being of this origin.<sup>95</sup> With such an uncertain material, I have chosen not to engage myself in any unsubstantiated arguments as to the date of formation of the place-names. The material is much too sparse. *Bólstaðr* cannot be shown with certainty to have been used as a place-name element in the Faroe Islands.

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95. Cf. Gammeltoft, Peder, 'Høvuðbryggj hjá navnafrøðingi', in *Málting* 24, (Tórshavn, 1998), pp. 2-8.



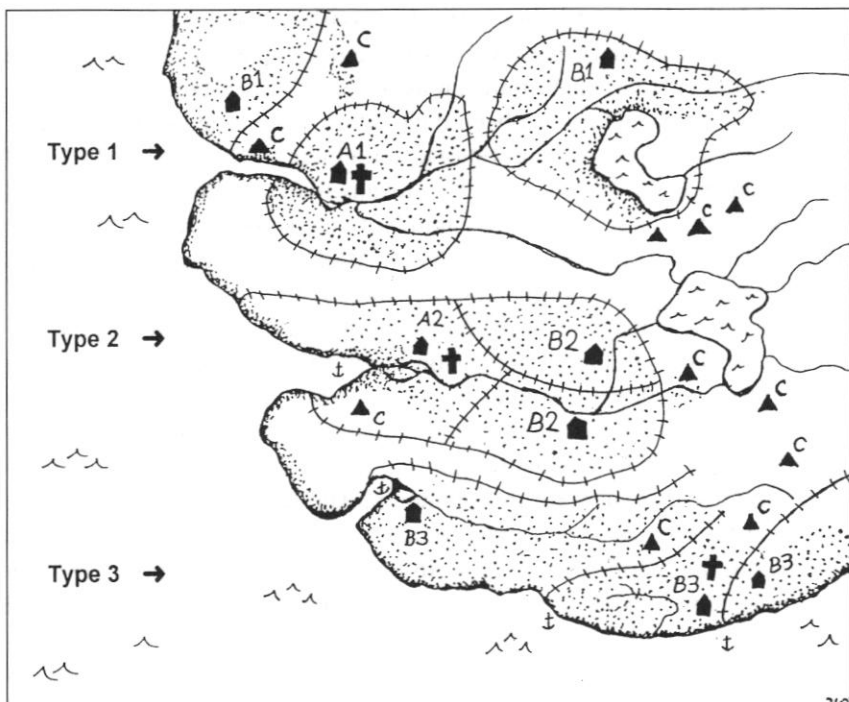
## 6. The topographical survey

### 6.1. General introduction to the chapter

The following model is based on the historian David Olson's model for settlement.<sup>96</sup> According to this, any farm will display a certain set of characteristics by which it can be classified. These characteristics will determine whether a settlement is *primary*, *secondary* or *peripheral* (see fig. 5). A classification according to this model can give an indication of the most likely chronology of a period of settlement expansion in any given region. In this context, it must be stressed that there is not necessarily any connection between the age of the settlement and that of its name; any name can be bestowed on any given location at any given time without this necessarily signifying any change or 'newness' about the place. Similarly, a settlement may be established on any given locality at any given time without the name of the locality changing (it merely undergoes a change in denotation). This cannot be sufficiently stressed.

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96. Olson, David, *Norse settlement in the Hebrides, an interdisciplinary study*, (unpublished Hovedoppgave for the University of Oslo, 1983). I am also indebted, for example, to: Brink, Stefan, 'Absolut datering av bebyggelsenamn', in Dalberg, V. et al. (eds), *NORNA-Rapporter 26. Bebyggelsers og bebyggelsesnavnes alder. NORNAs niende symposium i København 25-27 oktober 1982*, (Uppsala, 1984), pp. 18-66; Brink, Stefan, 'Denotationsförändringar bland våra äldsta bebyggelsenamnstyper', in Slotte, Peter (ed.), *NORNA-Rapporter 37. Denotationsbyte i ortnamn. Rapport från NORNA:s trettonde symposium i Tvärminne 9-11 oktober 1986*, (Uppsala, 1988), pp. 63-81; Göransson, Sölve, 'Bebyggelseförflytningar och namnkronologi på Öland', in Dalberg, V. et al. (eds), *NORNA-Rapporter 26. Bebyggelsers og bebyggelsesnavnes alder. NORNAs niende symposium i København 25-27 oktober 1982*, (Uppsala, 1984), pp. 268-294; Løken, Trond & Særheim, Inge, 'Førhistorisk landsby på Forsandmoen – med samanhengande busetnad frå yngre bronsealder til folkevandringstid – kastar nytt lys over eldre norsk busetjingshistorie', in Schmidt, Tom (ed.), *NORNA-Rapporter 43. Namn og eldre busetnad. Rapport frå NORNAs femtande symposium på Hamar, 9.-11. Juni 1988*, (Uppsala 1990), pp. 175-195; Pilø, Lars, 'Urgården – en mytes død. Et kritisk blick på grunnlaget for norsk bosetningshistorisk forskning', in Sandnes, B., Sandnes J., Stemshaug, O. & Stenvik, L. F., (eds) *NORNA-Rapporter 70B, Oluf Rygh. Rapport fra Symposium på Stiklestad 13-15 mai 1999*, (Uppsala, 2000), pp. 169-187.



- Steading
- ▲ Shieling
- ✚ Church
- ⚓ Harbour
- ☞ Sea
- ☁ Lake
- Streams and rivers
- ░ Arable land
- - - Holding boundaries

Type 1: A primary settlement (A1) with most of the original favourable factors intact. Detached, independent secondary units with many favourable factors (B1). Peripheral settlements on marginal land with few favourable factors (C).

Type 2: Two portions of good, arable land of the primary settlement have become independent secondary settlements (B2). The primary settlement is still recognisable (A2). Peripheral settlements on marginal land (C).

Type 3: The division of a primary settlement into several equal parts. All the resulting settlements are secondary (B3). The primary 'mother' settlement is no longer apparent (A3). Peripheral settlements on marginal land (C).

Fig. 5. An overview of Olson's model of settlement.

### 6.1.a. Methodical and theoretical considerations

The settlement situation may vary from region to region. Differences in settlement are also evident in the areas of study. For instance, the Norwegian settlement structure has been developing since at least the Iron Age, if not the Bronze Age, whereas Norse settlement in Scotland and Iceland is no older than the Viking Age. This means that, viewed from an overall perspective, the settlement situation in Norway is not directly comparable to that in the Norse colonies in the North Atlantic. However, with Olson's model I am only trying to give an indication of the settlement chronology in a period of expansion. Both Norway and the Norse colonies experienced a marked settlement expansion around the Viking Age. According to recent archaeological studies, a considerable settlement expansion in Norway seems to have started in the centuries immediately before the Viking Age.<sup>97</sup> This settlement expansion may be seen as an attempt to cope with a major increase in population. The same population increase may also be seen as a contributory factor to the establishment of Norse colonies in the North Atlantic area. In this respect, I have chosen to view the expansions in Norway and in the North Atlantic area as being rooted in the same conditions, which makes the expansion phase in both places comparable. I shall elaborate on this point later but first I want to discuss the settlement development in Norway and the colonies and its theoretical foundation.

Traditional Norwegian settlement history has evolved around the concept of the *Urgård* (primordial farm). This model describes a settlement development rooted in a few, central settlement units (*urgårder*), from which evolved a number of new farms in the early Iron Age and later. This concept can be traced back to two works from 1926: Sigurd Grieg, *Hadelands eldste bosetningshistorie*, and Magnus Olsen, *Ættegård og helligdom*, and cannot be said to have developed much since then. There is, however, some variation in the character of the *Urgård* in the different settlement-historical studies, from being more or less site-continuous, to mobile settlement units with settlement continuity within a topographically limited area.<sup>98</sup> The model has been criticised for presupposing a continuous development and expansion, an aspect not evident from recent research in settlement development and chronology.<sup>99</sup> The stable and con-

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97. Pilø, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, p. 182.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

99. Løken & Særheim, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, p. 182, and Brink, 1988, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, pp. 64-5.

tinuous development presupposed by the *Urgård* model is not evidenced from the other Scandinavian countries, e.g. Denmark, where settlement development is considered to have been rather more complex. Here, Iron Age settlements are generally thought to have been mobile settlement units until the end of the Viking Age, at which time they became stable.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, the *Urgård* model does not account for the possibility of a retraction in settlement structure resulting from a decrease in population. In other words, the *Urgård* model gives the impression of the existence of a special Norwegian settlement development rooted in stable Bronze Age (or earlier!) settlements with a high degree of temporal and developmental stability.

The most recent archaeological study of the settlement development in Norway has shown that the *Urgård* model is too simplistic and even wrong on some points. The archaeologist Lars Pilø has demonstrated that it is probable that the early Norwegian settlement structure consisted of mobile and successively relocated units well on into the Roman Iron Age. The settlement structure did not become stable until about 200 AD, in some cases even later. Furthermore, there were also some indications that new settlement units were established (*landnám* or 'land-taking') in the late Iron Age, i.e. after the stable settlement structure with site continuity had been introduced.<sup>101</sup> These aspects of Pilø's studies prove that the *Urgård* model is not correct in presuming that the settlement structure was stable and site-continuous as early as the Bronze Age. Instead, settlement units were successively relocated until the late Roman Iron Age and some were not even established until in the late Iron Age.

The inherent notion of the continuous development and expansion from the *Urgård* of this model also proves difficult to maintain in unmodified form. It has long been suggested that the settlement pattern is far more

100. Cf. e.g. Christensen, E. Porsmose, 'Overvejelser omkring den fysiske bebyggelse på overgangen mellem oldtid og middelalder', pp. 65-75, and Jeppesen, T. Grøngaard, 'Stedskontinuitet i fynske landsbyer belyst ved hjælp af den arkæologiske metode', pp. 76-87, both in Thrane, Henrik (ed.), *Kontinuitet og bebyggelse. Beretning fra et symposium d. 12.-14. maj 1977 afholdt af Odense universitet*. Skrifter fra Institut for Historie og Samfundsvidenskab nr. 22, Odense Universitet, (Odense, 1977); Jeppesen, T. Grøngaard, 'Oldtidsbebyggelse – middelalderbebyggelse? Kontinuitet eller brud?', in *Hikuin* 4, (1978), pp. 117-24.

101. Pilø, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, pp. 181-2.

complex than hitherto assumed by the *Urgård* model,<sup>102</sup> but it has not previously been investigated as thoroughly as by Pilø. According to him the following settlement development took place in his area of study:

The agrarian settlement expanded continuously throughout the Roman Iron Age and Migration Period, through both internal colonisation and external land-taking. Around 200 AD, a change took place in the settlement structure, and at the same time a more intensive type of farming with a fixed infield/outfield system, increased fertilisation and animal husbandry was introduced. In the course of the late Roman Iron Age the farm-buildings became site continuous. In this way a new type of farming settlement had developed in comparison to earlier [mobile settlements].

The early Merovingian Period was a time of settlement contraction. In the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age a considerable settlement expansion took place, to such an extent that settlement was established on the extremity of today's farming land. The succeeding expansion in the early Middle Ages manifested itself through the splitting up of farming units and intensified farming. [*My translation*]<sup>103</sup>

The development of the Hedemarken settlement structure appears to have undergone periods of expansion followed by periods of decline in settlement, etc. When there was a decline in settlement, the settlement contracted to the agriculturally most favourable sites.<sup>104</sup> The serious settlement expansion that took place in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, this expansion is an indication of the increase in population in Scandinavia during the period. This rise in population may be a major contributory factor to the sudden Norwegian exodus which led to the establishment of the Norse colonies in the British Isles and the North Atlantic. Secondly, owing to the popularity of the place-name element ON *bólstaðr* in the Viking Age, it must be assumed that it had relevance in this expansion phase. The onomastic considerations guiding the bestowing of a name in ON *bólstaðr* may, on the other hand, say something about the structure and expansion of settlement dur-

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102. Løken & Særheim, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, p. 182.

103. Pilø, Lars, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, p. 181-2.

104. *Ibid.*

ing this period. Indeed any new place-name element that has become active during a phase of expansion<sup>105</sup> may be able to reveal aspects of the structure and extent of the expansion. Thirdly, since the expansion in Scandinavian settlement in the Norse colonies in Scotland and the North Atlantic took place concurrently with the Norwegian settlement expansion, it is likely that there is a structural similarity in expansion. On a place-name level at least, there seems to have been little use for adopting new place-name elements in the colonies.<sup>106</sup> This indirectly suggests that a structural similarity can have existed.

Lars Pilø's studies were carried out in Hedemarken in East Norway, and no studies of exactly the same type have been carried out in Western Norway. However, other settlement historical studies from Western Norway, in particular Rogaland, seem generally to corroborate Pilø's findings with regard to a settlement expansion's having taken place in the Merovingian Period (and presumably later, although this study only goes as far as the Merovingian period).<sup>107</sup> Therefore, there is reason to assume that the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age settlement expansion evidenced in Hedemarken reflects the general Norwegian settlement situation of this period.

David Olson's model for settlement may furnish us with an indication of the settlement chronology of this period of expansion.<sup>108</sup> This study presupposes that the most suitable land is always selected first, then the next best land, etc.<sup>109</sup> The set of characteristics by which a location may be termed *primary*, *secondary* or *peripheral*, depends on how favourable the situation of the settlement is. How is favourability to be measured? A

105. Brink, 1988, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, p. 70.

106. Cf. Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 'Imitation and Innovation in the Scandinavian Place-Names of the Northern Isles of Scotland', *Nomina*, 11, (1988), pp. 75-85.

107. Løken & Særheim, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, p. 183.

108. Olson, David, *Norse settlement in the Hebrides, an interdisciplinary study*, (unpublished Hovedoppgave for the University of Oslo, 1983).

109. This idea is corroborated by archaeological studies from Denmark and has been most clearly expressed by the Danish archaeologist E. Porsmose Christensen, *op. cit.* in footnote 100, p. 73. Here he says:

"The old villages, heirs to the prehistoric settlements, had, however, major advantages over the new outlying settlements. The former were generally far larger and had more working capital at their disposal. The land of the individual farms [in the old villages] was more extensively exploited and, additionally, the farms were naturally established on the best land. No wonder that many of the new outlying settlements were given up after 200-400 years, when a general crisis in agricultural production in Europe set in." [*my translation*].

favourable site is one which is near important communication lines, has plenty of fertile and well-drained arable soil, room for expansion of the arable area, plenty of grazing, easy access to drinking water, abundant fuel and building materials, access to supplementary food sources, such as hunting, fishing and gathering. In other words, a favourable location would be situated close to the most important means of communication at the time of establishment, at a low altitude, have a fresh water stream or spring in the proximity, and would be situated on plenty of flat or gently sloping, fertile land.

A location which possesses all or most of the above favourable factors and no less favourable ones will be termed *primary* (**A**); a location which possesses some of the favourable factors but also has some less favourable ones will be termed *secondary* (**B**); if a location only or mainly possesses less favourable factors, it will be termed *peripheral* (**C**). A *primary* settlement, one which shares all or most of the favourability factors, is likely to develop into a center of political, religious and administrative significance. Common testimony for an origin as a primary settlement would thus be good overland communications, possibly cross-roads, and churches. In general, primary settlements should be considered to be the most plausible locations for initial permanent occupation. A *secondary* settlement, i.e. one which contains both favourable factors as well as some less favourable ones, is the result of a development dependent on a settlement in a primary location. Generally speaking, a *secondary* settlement location has a more limited potential for progress and is not likely to develop into a centre of any sort. The way a secondary settlement (**B**) can develop from a primary settlement (**A**) is threefold:

- 1) *The separation of a land parcel from a primary settlement.* The primary settlement remains the primary unit, as it clearly retains most of its favourability factors (**A1**). The detached parcel receives a substantial portion of the agricultural potential, while some of the other favourability factors, most notably those pertaining to proximity to communication (i.e. the sea) and drinking water, will be less favourable (**B1**).
- 2) *The division of a primary settlement into two or more parts* (not equal in quality, nor in size). The primary settlement is still *recognisable* and retains many of the favourable factors (**A2**). However, the division has resulted in some of the favourable factors becoming part of the holdings of the secondary settlement (**B2**). The primary settlement must hold a slight advantage over the secondary settlement, whether in soil quality, soil quantity, proximity to sea or drinking water.

- 3) *The division of a primary settlement into two or more equal parts* (equal in quality, not necessarily in size). Here, all the resulting settlements will be secondary (B3), as the original primary settlement is no longer apparent. Often, but not always, the name of the 'mother' primary settlement (A3) may be reflected in the township name.

Peripheral settlements (C) are the final category of settlements. They represent the latest stage of development. Their characteristics are that they have very few, if any, favourable factors. They are often far from communications/the sea, they usually have very limited amounts of arable soil and that of a poor quality, a limited grazing area, poor drainage of the fields, etc. Easy access to drinking water and access to supplementary food sources are the most likely favourable factors for a peripheral settlement to possess. Peripheral settlements may have derived from either primary or secondary settlements.

Naturally, the above model describes an ideal. In reality, various factors may interfere with the chronology. For instance, existing field structures, remains from ruined settlements and earlier settlement expansions, as well as the general topographical layout of the entire potential settlement area, may be factors in determining the situation of new settlement in an expansion phase. Depending on the age of the settlement-structure investigated, a settlement may either be a mobile unit – relocated whenever the soil on which it is situated has become exhausted, or it may be a stable unit with site continuity. However, settlements in Norway have generally been stable since the late Roman Iron Age, so for this study, the former possibility does not come into consideration, although this does not exclude the possibility of a 'mature' structure which may have been mobile at an earlier stage. But to return to the settlement structure present in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age, a *primary* settlement (A) may, according to all indications, either: 1) be the present manifestation of a structure dating from the Iron Age or Bronze Age, possibly a stable expression of an original mobile unit, or 2) be the result of an external expansion or land-taking. Depending on the severity of the preceding settlement decline, a *secondary* settlement (B) may either: a) be the present manifestation of a site-continuous structure dating from before the retraction phase – only applicable as a development from primary settlement possibility no. 1., above, or b) be a new development from a primary settlement – applicable to both primary settlement possibilities. A *peripheral* settlement (C) may have developed from any of the above possibilities. Although the age of the primary settlement may vary greatly, the internal expansion from a



primary unit in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age should have the same expression whatever the age of the original primary unit. The background and the conditions for an internal expansion should be similar wherever such an expansion is possible.

Seen from an onomastic point of view, an internal expansion may in some cases result in a muddled onomastic picture. If an internal expansion takes place within a 'mature' context, it is necessary to take the already existing name inventory into account.<sup>110</sup> For instance, if an area undergoing settlement is already utilised for non-permanent settlement purposes, it is possible that the previously used name of the locality being settled undergoes a change in denotation and becomes a settlement name. This name may be an original topographical name, or it may be a field name or cultural name. Alternatively, the name may, theoretically, be an original settlement name that has previously undergone a change in denotation (following a contraction in settlement) to become a field name or a topographical name, to change denotation yet again to become a settlement name. Within a 'mature' settlement-structure, a straightforward and normal settlement expansion in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age may result in settlement names of various origins and ages. The resulting settlement names may be new formations, original topographical names, or even original settlement names from an older, now lost, expansion phase. The first possibility is a formation reflecting the naming fashion at the time, whereas the second and third possibilities naturally reflect older utilisations and naming traditions. It must be pointed out that this type of older original settlement names – bestowed on new settlements taking part in a new internal expansion – cannot be used as evidence of settlement continuity, as the change in denotation implies a break in settlement continuity. The problem is, however, that it is not possible to distinguish such names from similar names that have not undergone a change in denotation. In other words, place-names may only be used with the utmost caution in the reconstruction of a settlement expansion.

In the case of ON *bólstaðr* there is little reason for concern, though. This place-name element does not seem to have been active before the settlement expansion in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age. This means that when a locality bearing a place-name of this origin is situated within a settlement structure, the name of the locality is not likely to predate this expansion period. A place-name in ON *bólstaðr* would necessarily have

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110. Brink, 1988, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, p. 64.

been bestowed upon a locality which either bore no name (i.e. never named, or its former name had died out) or whose previous name for some reason did not seem relevant. Although it is likely that a name change to *bólstaðr* signifies a change in utilisation of the locality, this is by no means certain, as a name change may stem from various factors, not least chance.

Ideally, every settlement area with a locality carrying a name in ON *bólstaðr* should have been subjected to a detailed archaeological and ecotopographical survey. This has not been possible, partly because this would be a job for specialised archaeologists and settlement historians, and certainly because it would go far beyond the limits of this work in every respect. The topographical model Olson has devised may help to describe the expansion from a primary unit, whatever its origins and age. This model provides a structurally simple overview of a possible expansion of a settlement area. The simplicity of the model is both its strength and its weakness. The positive aspect is that lay people (i.e. non-settlement historians and non-archaeologists) may utilise it productively and construct a basic settlement development. However, it also means that it cannot yield any more than a basic picture of expansion. Furthermore, it cannot take previous settlement expansions or contractions into account. In other words, finer nuances may in some instances be lost and this model will most probably not be suitable for detailed studies. But for a general survey like this one, I have found it to be fully adequate, especially considering the topographical situation in both *Sogn og Fjordane* and *Møre og Romsdal*, in which the possibilities for expansion were limited.

In order to carry out a statistically viable study, I have chosen to focus on some factors by means of which it is possible to establish favourability. Therefore, I have used parameters such as: a) *altitude*, b) *distance from the sea*, c) *distance from drinking water*, d) *gradient of slope*, e) *soil type* and f) *soil quality* for this study. I have chosen these parameters for their ease of use.

- a) *Altitude*: The altitude is a rough parameter. Olson's theory follows the simple notion that: the lower the altitude the more favourable is the location. The most fertile land is usually found in the valleys where eroded material from the mountains and the bedrock has accumulated. Exceptions to this may be found where bands of morainic sediment have been deposited by retracting ice-caps. However, these bands are not common enough in the areas of study to be able to render this parameter void.
- b) *Distance to the sea*: The sea has always played an important role for

Scandinavian and North Atlantic life. Until recently, it was the most reliable and fastest way of communication. Furthermore, the supplement to the diet that the sea offers must also be taken into consideration. Therefore, it figures that the closer to the sea a settlement is situated, the more favourable is the location. Distance to the sea is measured from the settlement site to the nearest direct major access to the sea, such as a fiord or the sea itself.

- c) *Distance to drinking water*: Drinking water is most essential to human sustenance. The easier the access to drinking water, the more favourable is the site. A watercourse is also most important in connection with the cultivation of the land belonging to a settlement. First and foremost, a water course aids the drainage of the soil. Furthermore, it can also be a source of fertilisation on low land and in meadows; when a watercourse floods the low lands in the spring time, it deposits nutrients as well as eroded sediment there, and the affected land is thereby improved.
- d) *Gradient of slope*: The slope of a site is important in terms of cultivation. The flatter the lands, the easier they are to cultivate. A steep gradient is indicative of a less favourable site. Furthermore, the steeper a slope, the more likely is it that the soil layer is thinner; loose sediment, of which soil consists, is first and foremost deposited on level ground where the possibility of transportation is negligible. On a steep slope, the force of gravity means that sediment is less likely to be deposited. The slope is calculated as the average gradient over a set distance (500 m for Norway; 250 m for Shetland) in the direction of the fall. The point of reference is situated midway in the distance measured.
- e) *Soil type*:<sup>111</sup> The type of soil of which the land surrounding a settlement consists is another important factor for sustenance. In order for soil to be considered to be of a good type, it needs to be both light for ease of cultivation and high in nutrients. These two factors do not necessarily accompany each other: *Boulder clay*, for instance, is usually of medium to good fertility, owing to its high content of nutrients. However, it is hard to work and is not an optimal soil to cultivate if the cultivation

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111. In the case of the Norwegian examples, I have been unable to find any material relating to soil type. Therefore, this parameter relies on my own estimates. The soil types for the Shetland examples are derived from the Institute of Geological Sciences 1:50,000 maps (1. Northern Shetland, 2. Western Shetland, 3. Central Shetland and 4. Southern Shetland, (1978)). My estimates for the Norwegian examples are based on my knowledge obtained from the use of these maps.

implements are of a primitive sort (as we know they were during the Viking Age). *Brown soil* is a mixture of various transported sediments. This soil type is fair to high in nutrients, making it relatively fertile. The composition of this soil is usually fine grain but often with sand, gravel or stone admixed. The soil is easily cultivated. *Undifferentiated glacial drift* is an umbrella term for various forms of transported sediment, whether sand, gravel or stone. This soil type is usually low in nutrients and of poor quality. It is, however, often easily cultivated – unless the proportion of stone is too large. *Blanket peat* can hardly be termed a type of soil. It consists of 100% organic material. However, owing to poor drainage locally the organic material is waterlogged and acidic. As a result, it cannot be broken down into nutrients. The quality is, therefore, exceedingly poor, and it is impossible to cultivate unless drainage and the addition of calcareous material have improved the land.

- f) *Soil quality*:<sup>112</sup> Owing to the often mixed types of soils, it is not possible to establish the quality from the types alone. Furthermore, the type of bedrock often affects the composition of the soil and how well it drains. This means that the quality of the soil cannot be ascertained from the type alone. Therefore, this parameter has been added. For ease of use, I have chosen only to use three categories, namely *poor*, *medium* and *good*.

I have chosen not to concentrate on the availability of fuel and building material, as the amount of wood available today is most likely not the same as during the Viking Age. Forestry and changes in climate render this parameter too uncertain.

### 6.1.b. The topographical study

I have chosen two specific areas for this study – one in Norway, the other in the Scotia Scandinavica area. As representative for Norway, I have chosen the counties of *Sogn og Fjordane* and *Møre og Romsdal*. To represent

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112. Again, I have been unable to find any Norwegian material relating to this aspect. Therefore, this parameter relies on my own estimates. The soil quality for the Shetland examples are from Thomas, M. F. & Coppock, J. T., *Land assessment in Scotland*, (Aberdeen, 1980) and O'Dell, Andrew, *The historical geography of the Shetland Islands* (Lerwick, 1939). The Norwegian examples are based on my knowledge derived from these works.

Scotia Scandinavica, I have selected the island group of *Shetland*.<sup>113</sup> These two areas have been selected for a number of reasons. The Scandinavian influence on the Scottish toponymy is predominantly West Scandinavian. In other words the overwhelming majority of Scandinavian settlers and namers in Scotland came from the present-day area of Norway. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake a survey of the conditions present in Norway in the Viking Age. It must be assumed that the Norwegian material represents the original topographical application of *bólstaðr*. Since it is the object of this book to detect development or change in the application of *bólstaðr*, it is necessary to do a survey in a colonial context.

The reason why I have chosen specifically the areas mentioned above is for general comparability. Both areas chosen for this study contain approximately 40-50 names (Norway 47, Shetland 40) which originate or possibly originate from ON *bólstaðr*. Regarding *Shetland*, there are some further names of settlements which are not original *bólstaðr*-formations. They appear to be of 16<sup>th</sup>-century date and later analogical formations in *-bister*. Nevertheless, they have been included in a separate study, in order to find out whether it is possible by means of topographical evidence to differentiate between original and later settlements.

The few examples that I have chosen to elaborate on in this chapter will be discussed and illustrated in their own settlement-structural context. The entire context will not be discussed, only the aspects and areas I deem the most relevant.

## 6.2. Sogn og Fjordane fylke and Møre og Romsdal fylke

The landscape of the counties of *Sogn og Fjordane* and *Møre og Romsdal* consists of a mountainous plateau (c. 700-1000 metres high) intersected by deeply-cut fiords and valleys. Because of the steep mountain sides there is very little farming land available. Only about 3% of this region is fit for cultivation. The arable land is found exclusively on – or near – the valley floor, where the slope is moderate enough for fair deposits of sediment. The extensive mountainous areas have yielded much eroded material since the Ice Age and most of this has been deposited in the valleys. Therefore, the soil layer is often generous. Of soil types, brown soils and

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113. See also Gammeltoft, Peder, 'Om brugen af gammelnorsk *bólstaðr* i Norge og Nordatlanten', in Sandnes, B., Sandnes J., Stemshaug, O. & Stenvik, L. F., (eds) *NORNA-Rapporter 70B, Oluf Rygh. Rapport fra Symposium på Stiklestad 13-15 mai 1999*, (Uppsala, 2000), pp. 77-94.

undifferentiated glacial drift abound, making the soil easy to cultivate and often fertile, too. Today, much of the arable land is utilised for fodder (grass and hay), and some of the warmer slopes are used for fruit production. There is usually easy access to such necessities as drinking water and wood for building material, owing to the masses of melt water and the extensive forests on the mountain side on soil not fit for cultivation. The geology of the area consists typically of gneiss. This hard rock may impede drainage in areas with too moderate a slope, thus creating water-logging.

The main settlements in the area are usually situated on the flat, easily cultivated valley floor by the edge of the fiord. These settlements must be regarded as primary settlements, as they contain most, if not all, of the favourability factors as defined by Olson. Much additional settlement has taken place on the poorer land (in terms of favourability factors) inland in the valleys or on the slopes facing the fiords. These must generally be considered secondary settlements, their positions being inferior to those of the main settlements in the area. Some uphill farming has also taken place. These settlements were originally probably not permanent and are usually inferior to the lower-lying primary and secondary settlements. These are peripheral settlements.

### **The topographical facts**

Of the 47 settlements in the counties of *Sogn og Fjordane* and *Møre og Romsdal* whose names are known to derive from *bólstaðr*, some seven settlements are now lost or their location unknown. A further four settlements have not been investigated beyond what can be deduced from map evidence; two because of their isolated positions (*Ormbostad* and *Myklebust*, Haram sokn); two owing to the general area's being built up to such an extent that the original settlement is no longer visible (*Veibust* and *Myklebust*, Herøy sokn). This leaves 36 fully surveyed settlements. These 36 settlements form the basis for the Norwegian survey, although the 4 partly surveyed settlements are also included in all of the parameters which are deducible from map-material. This means that all the analyses for *Sogn og Fjordane* and *Møre og Romsdal* counties are based on 40 settlements, although the parameters for soil type and soil quality have a basis of only 36 names.

<b>Settlement type:</b>		<i>Number:</i>	<i>Percentage:</i>
	A:	-	-
	B1:	21	52.5%
	B2:	19	47.5%
	B3:	-	-
	C:	-	-
<b>Altitude:</b>	Highest:	360 m	
	Lowest:	10 m	
	Average:	88 m	
	Typical altitude range	10-130 m	(80% of all settlements)
<b>Distance to the sea:</b>	Greatest:	32,000 m	
	Shortest:	50 m	
	Average:	4,420 m	
	Typical range of distance:	100-6,000 m	(80% of all settlements)
<b>Distance to drinking water:</b>	Greatest:	500 m	
	Shortest:	50 m	
	Average:	146 m	
	Typical range of distance:	50-250 m	(85% of all settlements)
<b>Slope:</b>	Steepest:	36%	
	Gentlest:	2%	
	Average:	16%	
	Typical range of slope:	8-28%	(72.5% of all settlements)
<b>Soil type:</b>		<i>Nos of settlements:</i>	<i>Percentage:</i>
	Alluvium:	-	-
	Blanket peat:	-	-
	Boulder clay:	-	-
	Brown soil:	18	50%
	Undifferentiated glacial drift:	3	8%
	Mixed soils:	15	42%
<b>Soil quality:</b>		<i>Nos of settlements:</i>	<i>Percentage:</i>
	Poor:	8	22%
	Medium:	19	53%
	Good:	9	25%

## Analysis

The *Sogn og Fjordane* and *Møre og Romsdal* settlements of the *bólstaðr* type display a number of common features. Their topographical characteristics are remarkably similar throughout the surveyed area. All show typical secondary features. In fact, there are no settlements which show primary characteristics, nor are there any which show peripheral characteristics. This is especially obvious when taking overall *Settlement type* into consideration. All names are to be found within the categories of *B1* and *B2*.<sup>114</sup> The two categories are of almost equal size, 52.5% of all settlements belonging to *B1* and 47.5% to *B2*. The limited range of application clearly seems to suggest a specific usage in settlement terms. There can be no doubt as to their secondary nature, several of the analyses of the parameters below will show so. Nevertheless, these parameters will also show that whatever is lacking in certain respects as the result of being secondary settlements is often counter-balanced by such aspects as fertile soil and easy access to drinking water, etc.

The slightly larger category, the *B1* type settlements, are all detached units. A good example of a fully detached *B1* type settlement is *Myklebust*, Norddal sokn, Møre og Romsdal fylke (see fig. 6). The original primary settlement unit in the area is probably *Sylte*, which is situated at the mouth of Valldøla with easy access to the sea and to drinking water. Behind *Sylte* lies its farming land, stretching at least as far as Øygarden – a subsidiary to *Sylte*. Alternatively, the settlement on the other side of the river, Muri, might possibly be the original primary settlement, although this locality is far smaller, being restricted to a tongue of land at the mouth of the river. Behind Muri, there is only a very narrow stretch of land which, however, opens up to a relatively generous area, now taken up by the late settle-

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114. *B1*: The separation of a land parcel from a primary settlement, a clearly detached secondary settlement. The primary settlement remains and retains most of its favourability factors. The detached parcel receives a substantial portion of the agricultural potential, but with fewer favourability factors.

*B2*: The division of a primary settlement into two or more parts (not equal in quality, nor in size). The primary settlement is still *recognisable* and retains many of the favourable factors. However, the division has caused some of the favourable factors to become part of the holdings of the secondary settlement. The primary settlement holds a slight advantage over the secondary settlement, either in soil quality or quantity or proximity to the sea and drinking water.

*B3*: The splitting up of a primary settlement into two or more *equal* parts. The resulting settlements will all be secondary, as the primary settlement is no longer apparent nor *recognisable*.



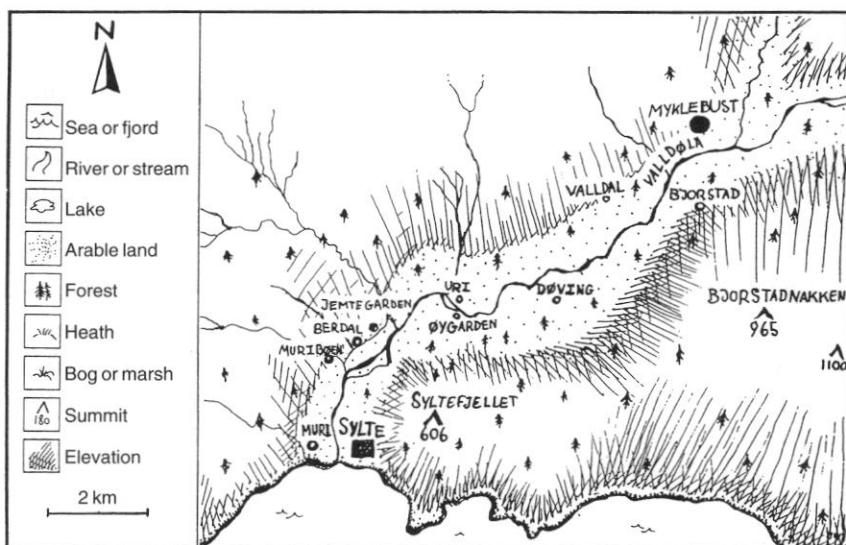


Fig. 6. Myklebust, Norddal sokn, Møre og Romsdal fylke, Norway.

ments, Muribøen, Berdal and Jemtegarden. Although these have almost without a doubt developed from Muri, they reflect a late splitting up of the farming units. It is, therefore, doubtful if Muri really is the primary settlement. Both *Sylte* and Muri are ancient, and they are both recorded for the first time in *Formanna sögur*.<sup>115</sup> However, in the *AB*, the parish church appears to have been situated in *Sylte*, an indication of the original superiority of *Sylte*.<sup>116</sup>

If one accepts that *Sylte* is the original primary settlement, there are a number of subsidiary settlements to it of various types. Up valley there are a number of B1 secondary settlements, Døving, Valldal, Bjørstad and *Myklebust*, etc. Most of these settlements were probably established during the settlement expansion phase in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age. In this general picture, Muri and Uri may well represent early B2 type divisions from *Sylte*, which is assumed to be a settlement possibly predating this settlement expansion. Additionally, *Sylte* has another subsidiary B2 settlement, Øygarden, which cannot but be young. This is seen

115. Cf. NG XIII, pp. 115-9.

116. *Ibid*, p. 115.

from the fact that it is not mentioned in the written sources. Furthermore, the name itself suggests that it has been established on a ruined settlement (with a lost name).

The farming land is generally good for the area, consisting mainly of brown soil. It is, therefore, not surprising that the settlement area, from an onomastic point of view, has the appearance of being a 'mature' settlement area. The primary settlement unit itself, *Sylte*, derives from ON *sultar* (pl. of *sult*, f., 'a small bog') and must initially have had a topographical denotation. In its vicinity are a few possible *vin*-names, such as Muri (possibly from \**Mærr-vin*)<sup>117</sup> and Uri (< \**Urð-vin*). These may be original field-names which at some stage have undergone a change to denote a settlement.<sup>118</sup> Whether these names already denoted settlements in the expansion phase in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age is not known, but the apparent age of the names taken into consideration, this is a possibility. The possibility remains also, however, that their present status is the result of the above mentioned expansion. Further up the valley, there are the now nucleated settlements of Døving and Valldal, both original topographical names, the former possibly related to Norw. *dyvja*, 'quiver, shake', whereas Valldal probably takes its name from the section of the valley in which it is situated. Their origin as settlement names probably dates from the settlement expansion in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age, as they lie contiguous to localities which bear settlement names typical of this period, namely *Myklebust* and *Bjorstad*. These settlement names should possibly be seen as having been taken into use because the suitable topographical names had already been utilised. These two settlements are situated 5-5.5 km from the primary settlement, *Sylte*. The settlement *Myklebust* is rather larger than *Bjorstad*. Both settlements are far removed from the sea. However, this is more than compensated for by their general location. For instance, *Myklebust* is situated 5.5 km up Valldalen at the point where Myklebustelva flows into the river Valldøla. Here is a large, relatively flat area (the overall relief is the average 16%, but the arable land is situated on a much gentler slope) with ample amounts of good quality brown soil. There is only some 300 m to Myklebustelva and about the same distance to the much larger Valldøla. At an altitude of only 90 m, *Myklebust* is well sheltered on the valley floor by the surrounding mountains. Furthermore, there is plenty of woodland in the area for tim-

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117. NG XIII, pp. 115-6 has a different interpretation of this name.

118. Cf. Brink, 1988, *op. cit.* in footnote 96, pp. 71-2.

ber, firewood and additional food sources. The situation of Bjorstad is similar, albeit only about a third of the size of *Myklebust*.

The overall picture of this settlement area is of an original primary settlement, *Sylte*, situated at the mouth of the Valldøla River. The settlement itself most probably predates the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age settlement expansion considerably. In its immediate vicinity, there are possible traces of ancient original field names, field names that almost without a doubt relate to *Sylte*. As settlement names, they may or may not predate this settlement phase. Further up the valley there are settlements which bear names which appear to date from the time of the settlement expansion. The settlement *Myklebust* seems to belong firmly within this stratum. The settlements Døving, Valldal, *Myklebust* and Bjorstad are *B1* type settlements, probably satellites of *Sylte*.

*Skjelbostad*, Voll sokn, Møre og Romsdal fylke is a fine representative of a category *B2* settlement (see fig. 7). It forms the smaller section of the village of *Innfjorden*, where it is clearly separated from the main settlement area (which remains the larger part of the two). The valley behind *Innfjorden* does not have great agricultural potential, which means that expansion here has mostly been in the form of a subsectioning of the main settlement unit, and the *Innfjorden* settlement has a distinctly subdivided character. The main settlement area of *Innfjorden* consists of a number of subdivisions, of which Vik and Bø are the most prominent. These subdivisions give the entire east side of the mouth of the valley a *B3* character. In other words the original settlement on this side is no longer evident. Divided by the Innfjordselva, the west side of *Innfjorden* is taken up by *Skjelbostad*. Compared with the dense sectioning up of the east side, *Skjelbostad* is different in character. It shares many favourable factors with the east side of *Innfjorden*, such as low altitude (30 m), proximity to the sea (800 m), fertile soil (good quality brown soil). However, its portion of land is small and limited – to one side by the Innfjordselva, to the other by the mountain of Skjervan. This means that there is little room for expansion. In fact, the arable section is so limited that settlement has been retracted uphill, as close to the border between the arable and non-arable land as possible, in order to waste as little valuable soil as possible on the settlement site. This has meant, however, that the distance to water is relatively great (250 m), as is the overall slope (16%). As such, *Skjelbostad* has the character of a *B2* type settlement in comparison to *Innfjorden* itself. Additionally, a number of probably younger settlements, such as Vonheim, Nyheim, Gjerde and Engan, are found up valley from *Innfjorden*, utilising the limited amounts of land there.

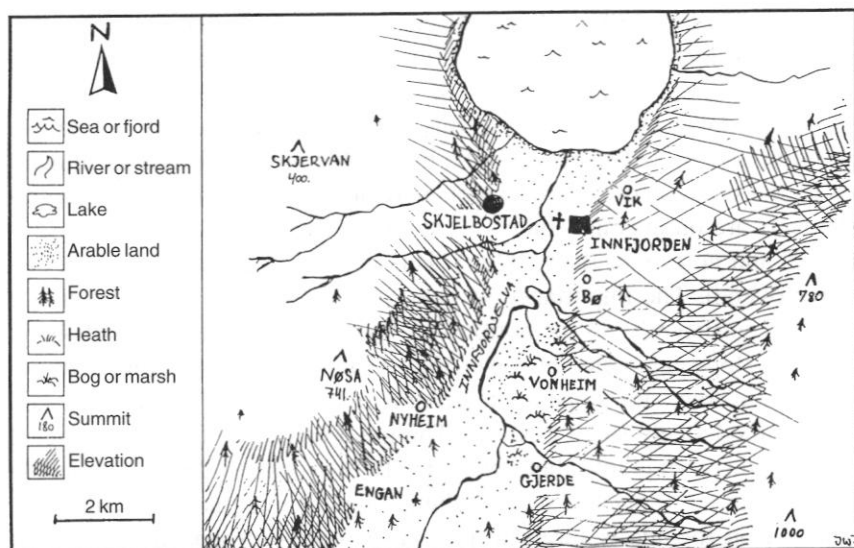


Fig. 7. Skjelbostad, Voll sokn, Møre og Romsdal fylke, Norway.

Onomastically, the settlement area does not seem to have the 'maturity' of the Sylte settlement area. For instance, there are no genuine names in *vin* and *heim* (Vonheim and Nyheim have been renamed recently), nor are there any original simplex topographical place-names to be found among the present settlement-name material. In fact, none of the place-names in this settlement area appear to have been coined much earlier than the Viking Age. It is possible that this settlement area may represent an instance of late Merovingian Period/Viking Age external expansion with subsequent internal expansion as the population density grew.

At the center of the settlement area is the nucleated area of *Innfjorden*, with one part heavily subdivided and the other, smaller, part (*Skjelbostad*) almost undivided. The reason for this heavy subdivision of settlement may be a lack of suitable expansion possibilities up valley. *Skjelbostad* seems to belong firmly within the stratum of subdivision. Its limited possibilities for expansion have shielded it from divisions like those of the main settlement area.

All the Norwegian settlements in this survey conform in essence to the two types exemplified above. All settlements are found within 10-360 metres above sea level (on average 88 m above sea level and usually at

altitudes from 10-130 m). Since the general mountain plateau in the area is found at altitudes from 700-1,000 m, the surveyed settlements are all found within the lowest third to half of the landscape, near the shores of fiords and lakes and up valleys. This implies that a generally favourable position is typical. The concept of a favourable position is further indicated by the situation of the settlements in relation to drinking water. The settlements are on average some 150 m from drinking water (typically 50-250 m and no further than 500 m). This must be regarded as a short distance overall. The importance of proximity to drinking water cannot be stressed sufficiently, so the notion of a favourable location prevails here, too. The slope parameter, however, distorts the picture in a different direction. On average, the slope in the general area is 16%, which must be said to be a moderately steep gradient. The gradient ranges from a near level 2% to a staggering 36%, but lies typically between 8%-28%, from gentle to steep slopes. Slopes of such gradients suggest marginalised settlement. The reason for this is surely to be found in the fact that the amount of arable land is limited so that the settlement itself has been pushed uphill onto the more marginal slope in order to avoid wasting precious farming land on the settlement site. This clearly suggests a less than optimal situation.

That the settlements surveyed must all be regarded as primarily agricultural holdings can be seen from a number of parameters. The soil type is typically of the fertile, easily cultivated kind, brown soil (50%) and mixed soils – i.e. brown soil mixed with undifferentiated glacial drift – (42%), and only to a lesser extent the easily cultivated but relatively infertile undifferentiated glacial drift (8%). In other words, the soil is of prime importance for settlements of this type. The quality of the soil is most often related to the type. Some settlements stand on definitely poor land (22%), slightly more are situated on good quality land (25%), whereas the majority are to be found on medium quality soil (53%).<sup>119</sup>

The type and quality of the soil seem to be of greater importance to the establishment of *bólstaðr* settlements than proximity to the sea and communication lines. Settlements of this type can be found as far away as 32 km from direct access to the sea. The settlement in question, *Myklebust*, Helgheim sokn, Sogn og Fjordane fylke, is, however, situated on the

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119. It should be borne in mind that the figures for soil quality are the result of my own estimates so that the results should be approached with due caution. Nevertheless, the overall picture should not be disturbed by possible inaccuracies.

banks of Jølstravatnet, which has indirect access to both Førdesfjorden and Gloppenfjorden, so communication is not excluded by its situation far from the sea. Nevertheless, only 7 settlements are more than 6 km removed from direct sea access, and the overwhelming majority (80%) of settlements are found within a tolerable distance of the sea, the average distance from the sea being 4.4 km.

The picture emerging from the survey of *Sogn og Fjordane* and *Møre og Romsdal*, clearly points to an application of *bólstaðr* as a general term for a farm which is the result of the splitting up of a primary settlement unit into portions. They are large secondary farms to which the agricultural potential was of the greatest importance. Their secondary nature, however, often meant that the arable potential was limited and farming land was at a premium. Therefore, the actual settlement sites were often placed on the most infertile part of the land, often as far up the hill as possible and often where the soil layer was shallow. Another important factor which was looked out for at the establishment was proximity to drinking water.

When taking name-typology into consideration, it becomes evident that the application of *bólstaðr* to a large secondary farm is the original one. There were two main specifics with which *bólstaðr* was compounded during the Viking Age, namely ON *mikill*, adj., 'large, great' and ON *heilagr*, adj., 'holy, sacred'. The former is contained in 24 of the names of the settlements of this survey; the latter with four. Additionally, three names of settlements are simplex formations, and nine have other specifics. Of the 24 settlements with the name *\*Miklabólstaðr*, twelve are of the *B1* type and twelve are of the *B2* type – in other words an equal share of settlement type. The *\*Helgibólstaðr* settlements, on the other hand, favour the *B1* type slightly over the *B2* type (three to one), but the number is too small for me to make any assumptions on this ground. Of the settlements that bear simplex names, one belongs to the *B1* type and two to *B2*. The group of settlements with names with other specifics is split almost equally between the *B1* type (five) and the *B2* type (four). In my opinion, these figures cannot but correlate with the findings above that the normal application of the element was to a large secondary farm. Analogy in the form of *associative naming* does not seem to have played any real part in the application of the names containing the two most frequently occurring specifics to settlements.

Were the settlements whose names originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m., established on new farming land or do they represent a younger expansion

bility factors) inland in the valleys and coastal slopes. These must generally be considered secondary settlements, their positions being inferior to that of the main settlements in the area. There has also been much peripheral settlement in Shetland – usually to a large degree dependent on the primary and secondary settlements. The peripheral settlements either manifest themselves as uphill farming settlements, or more usually, they stand on, or near to, the primary and secondary settlement sites. This is largely owing to the limited amount of farming land available. These settlements are characterised by being inferior to the primary and secondary settlements, usually in terms of arable land and access to the sea.

### The topographical facts

The modern Shetland reflex of ON *bólstaðr* is *-bister* if compounded and *Bousta/Busta* if in the simplex. There are 50 settlements in *Shetland* which bear such reflexes. However, there are some complications in connection with this reflex. Some ten Shetland place-names which bear a *-bister* reflex can, by linguistic and other analyses, be shown to have origins other than original ON *bólstaðr* (see also Appendices). One, *Lumbister*, Yell, is likely to derive from ON *staðir*, m., ‘a farm’; another, *Stobister*, Bressay, possibly derives from ON *setr*, n. ‘a shieling, dwelling, farm’. Eight *bister*-names<sup>122</sup> can, with at least a high degree of probability, be said to be late place-name formations in which *-bister* was added merely on analogy with already known place-names in *-bister* (i.e. genuine *bólstaðr* place-names).<sup>123</sup> The ten settlements to which these names belong will not be included in the general survey, as they are clearly not representative of original *bólstaðr*-settlement. A schematic overview of the preferred location of settlements is offered in Appendix 3, in which it is possible to ascertain how the settlement characteristics of this group of settlements are different from those of original *bólstaðr*-settlements. The location of two settlements, namely *Eastabuster*, Papa Stour, Walls and Sandness parish and *Westbister*, Lerwick parish, is not known. Furthermore, one settlement, *Little Bousta*, Walls and Sandness parish is evidently a late divi-

122. They are: *Everabister*/Everby, Bressay; *Grindabister*, Yell; *Lunabister*, Dunrossness parish; *Nedrabister*, Yell; *Sundrabister*, Yell; probably *Blumbister*, Burra, Lerwick parish, and *Norrabister*, Bigga; and possibly *Sinnabister*, Dunrossness parish, – albeit being of more uncertain origin.

123. Cf. Ch. 7.3, below, and Pamp, Bengt, ‘Onomastisk Analogi’, in Albøge, G. *et al.* (eds) *Norna-rapporter 45. Analogi i navngivning*, (Uppsala, 1991), p. 159.

<b>Settlement type:</b>	<i>Number:</i>	<i>Percentage:</i>
A:	-	-
B1:	20	54%
B2:	7	19%
B3:	7	19%
C:	3	8%
<b>Altitude:</b>	Highest:	60 m
	Lowest:	5 m
	Average:	28 m
	Typical altitude range	10-45 m (84% of all settlements)
<b>Distance to the sea:</b>	Greatest:	2,500 m
	Shortest:	100 m
	Average:	490 m
	Typical range of distance:	100-700 m (84% of all settlements)
<b>Distance to drinking water:</b>	Greatest:	600 m
	Shortest:	50 m
	Average:	200 m
	Typical range of distance:	50-300 m (86% of all settlements)
<b>Slope:</b>	Steepest:	32%
	Gentlest:	2%
	Average:	8%
	Typical range of slope:	2-10% (81% of all settlements)
<b>Soil type:</b>	<i>Nos of settlements:</i>	<i>Percentage:</i>
	Alluvium:	-
	Blanket peat:	-
	Boulder clay:	10 27%
	Brown soil:	-
	Undifferentiated glacial drift:	10 27%
	Mixed soils:	17 46%
<b>Soil quality:</b>	<i>Nos of settlements:</i>	<i>Percentage:</i>
	Poor:	22 59%
	Medium:	8 22%
	Good:	7 19%



banks of Loch Isbister and near numerous streams, *Isbister* is only 100 m from drinking water. What especially detracts from the situation of *Isbister* is the limited amount of land and the lack of a decent harbour. The shore is rocky and has no natural shelter as such.

*Crosbister*, Unst, may be a good example of a B2-type settlement in Shetland (see fig. 9). It is situated some 1-1.2 km east of the primary settlement of *Wick* on the opposite side of the valley they share. *Wick* probably takes its name from the original name of the bay, which is now called Lunda Wick, so called from the later settlement of Lund. *Wick* is recorded as *Vik* as early as 4/3-1360 (SheDoc2, no. 11 (AM 100, 4)). The entire settlement area shows signs of having been cultivated and settled in pre-Norse times with at least two broch-sites, an Iron Age farmstead ruin and two standing stones – all testaments to Pictish activity in the area. The settlement area is found on both sides of Lunda Wick. The soil quality is generally good (undifferentiated glacial drift often mixed with limestone deposits) and the slopes are gentle to moderately steep. Within this structure, the present settlement of *Wick* has the lion's share of the land. *Wick* and the slightly later Lund take up the entire southern side of the bay, whereas *Crosbister*, Underhoull and the possibly later Burragarth take up the more limited northern side of the bay. The settlements *Wick* and Lund are situated on the best land (*Wick* being the larger settlement) in close proximity (300 m) to a large sandy beach. The access to water, however, is a little limited with some 200 m to the nearest fresh water reservoir, Loch of Vigga. The overall good quality of the soil has made it possible for a considerable internal splitting up of the settlement in a number of B2 type settlements. *Wick* still remains the major settlement (A2). An indication of *Wick*'s original importance is visible through the remains of a church site on the lands of *Wick* itself.

In comparison, *Crosbister* originally only appears to have been about a third of the size of *Wick*. The original subdivision on the northern side of the bay seems to have been *Crosbister* and Underhoull. The present settlement of Burragarth seems to be a later addition to the settlement structure. In the documents Burragarth (first recorded in 1628) is often mentioned as 'outset of *Wick*'. In comparison with *Wick*, *Crosbister* takes up a decidedly secondary position in the overall settlement structure. It is situated 1,000 m from the sea on a moderate to steep slope (16%) with only a limited amount of arable soil. That the amount of soil is at a premium is seen in the way the settlement site itself is perched uphill near the border of the non-arable land. In this way buildings take up as little valuable land as possible. The soil at *Crosbister* is, however, of fair quality. The soil type

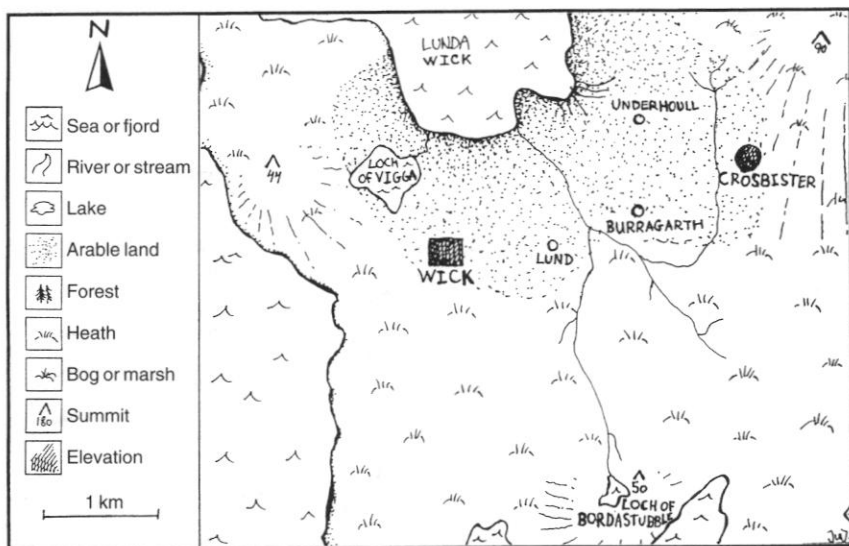


Fig. 9. Crosbister, Unst, Shetland.

is classed as undifferentiated glacial drift, which is easily worked but not normally of such a high fertility. An explanation for the fertility of *Crosbister* can be that a fair amount of the deposited material stems from the limestone bands found in the underground at *Crosbister*. The land is, furthermore, easily drained and there is no great distance to water. The distance of 1,000 m to the sea is, nevertheless, rather great. This seems to signal a focus on agriculture.

A Shetland B3-type settlement unit is visible in the present township of *North-a-Voe* (or *Camb*), Yell (see fig. 10). It is a substantial settlement area, situated on the north bank of *Mid Yell Voe*. *North-a-Voe* has two settlements whose names originate from *bólstaðr*, namely *Kirkabister* and *Utrabister*.<sup>125</sup> Each settlement could originally have constituted about half of the township. However, later development of the area has watered this picture down somewhat but the original layout is still visible. What is remarkable about this township is that there is no trace whatsoever of the

125. There is also a third locality in the township site with a name in *-bister*, namely *Grindabister*. It is not included here, as it is a later coinage in Shetl. *bister*, sb. (see Appendix 1).

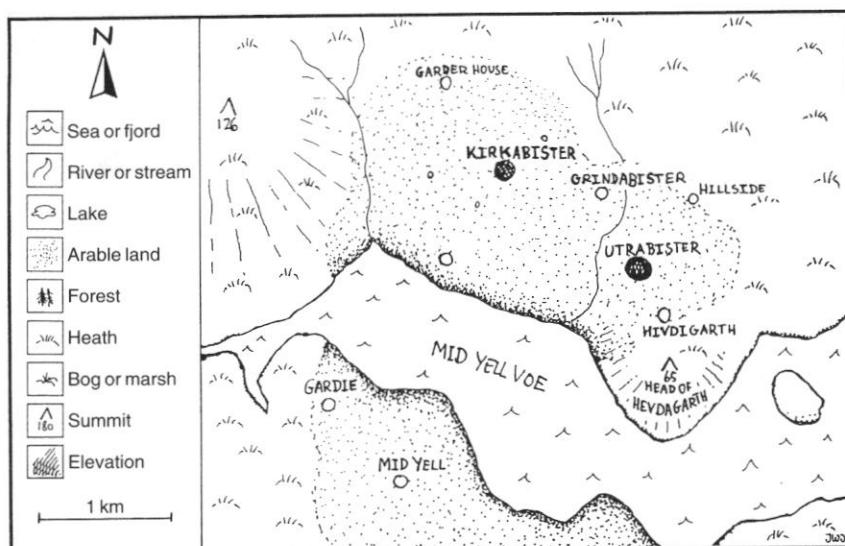


Fig. 10. *North-a-Voe*, Yell, Shetland.

original primary settlement. The carving up of the primary settlement must have been so effective as to leave the township with only secondary settlements. Both *Kirkabister* and *Utrabister* are situated on the best land parcels in the township on gentle slopes of 4%. The soil quality is classified as poor, but is of medium to good quality for the general area. The soil type is boulder clay, which is high in nutrients but hard to work. Hence, both of the *bólstaðr*-settlements have a fair agricultural economic potential, possibly supplemented with fishing, as the amount of arable land is somewhat limited. That the township has had a fair economic potential is seen in the many houses in present *North-a-Voe*. The distance to drinking water is short for both settlements, in neither case exceeding 100 m. All in all two fair settlement sites, if not perfect in every sense, then of a potential large enough to have developed into a substantial Yell township.

Many of the settlement structures in Shetland appear to be situated in a 'mature' settlement and utilisation context, insofar that there are numerous visible remains of the previous inhabitants, the Picts. This is also the case with the settlement structures in which the above discussed *Isbister* and *Crosbister* are situated. Owing to the limited amount of arable land avail-

able in Shetland, it certainly not unthinkable that the Norse settlement should overlay existing structures. The presence of pre-Norse remains within a Norse settlement structure does not, however, indicate continuity in utilisation or settlement. It should rather be seen as the result of land being at a premium.

In Norway, the 'mature' character of a settlement area may be reflected in the place-name material, too. This is not the case in Shetland, which further indicates a break in continuity. This illustrates well the similarities and differences between the expansion which took place in Norway in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age and the one which took place in Shetland in the Viking Age. In both cases the settlement expansion was considerable, utilising all the available land. The settlement expansion manifested itself either as external expansion (land taking) or as internal expansion. When an external expansion took place a new settlement was established on the best possible unsettled locality and would normally develop into a primary settlement. In an internal expansion process, secondary settlement could expand in various ways from a focal locality or primary settlement. The primary settlement could either have been established during the period of expansion, or predate it (possibly as far back as late Roman Iron Age). If the primary settlement was considerably older than the expansion period, the secondary (and peripheral) settlements established during the expansion phase in the late Merovingian Period/Viking Age could overlay a previously utilised and settled (and subsequently lost) settlement structure. When this was the case in Western Norway, the existing place-name material (usually in the form of field names and topographical names) could in some cases be reutilised as names for settlements. In other cases new place-names were coined to cater for the expansion, in many cases place-names which describe the settlement. In Shetland, however, no similar place-name corpus seems to have been available to any great extent for the incoming Norse so that the entire place-name material would have to be invented as the settlement expansion progressed. This might help to explain the greater popularity of habitative generics like ON *bólstaðr* in the Norse colonies in Scotland.

To recapitulate, all the Shetland *bólstaðr*-settlements in this survey conform in general to one of the three types of secondary settlement. The settlements are typically found at altitudes between 10-45 m and not exceeding 60 m. 80% of the Shetland landscape is of altitudes from 0-150 m, so the Shetland *bólstaðr*-settlements are found in the lowest areas – the areas typically settled earliest. The altitude parameter helps show just how

favourable this settlement-type is. The same is reflected in the parameter of slope. Although the Shetland landscape is hilly rather than mountainous, a typical range of slope of between 2-10% is low for any settlement type. The distance to the sea is not great for this type either, typically from 100-700 m and the settlements are not found more than 2.5 km inland. This short distance to the sea, however, does not only reflect the high status of this settlement type but also the fact that the amount of arable land is rather limited in Shetland. It is confined mainly to coastal areas and to the most fertile valleys. Therefore, the distance to the sea probably does not so much indicate a high status as signify a focus on the importance of cultivation for this settlement type.

What, however, appears to be of at least the same importance as the arable potential is access to drinking water. The distance to drinking water is low. There is on average 200 m to drinking water for *bólstaðr*-settlements, typically between 100-500 m, and never exceeding 600 m. Access to drinking water is always of prime importance for human sustenance and a location in close proximity to water is therefore preferable.

The significance of ON *bólstaðr*, m., as a generic for a secondary settlement type is greatly affected by the generally low arable potential of the soil. *Bólstaðr*-settlements are rarely found on what is classified as good quality soil. Only 19% of all settlements of this type are on good quality land. A situation on medium quality soils is only slightly more common. Some 21% of all settlements are situated on soil of this quality. The bulk of the *bólstaðr*-settlements are situated on land classified as of poor quality – as many as 59% of the settlements surveyed. This land classification, however, only reveals part of the picture. Typically, the surveyed settlements are on the more fertile sites as compared with other sites in a given local area, and, furthermore, they often have larger areas of land available. The soil types for *bólstaðr*-settlements are the typical boulder clay (27%) and undifferentiated glacial drift (27%) – normally various mixtures of the two (46%).

What emerges from this study of Shetland settlements whose names originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m., is a picture of secondary settlements established either on tracts of land distant from the primary settlement, or, less commonly, as the result of a carving up of the primary settlement's main lands. Often, the splitting up erases every trace of the primary unit. The resulting *bólstaðr*-settlements are typically large to medium size farms with many favourability factors, such as proximity to the sea and communications, drinking water and a fair arable potential. In spite of this,

the total amount of arable land is often limited and the fertility and soil type are often not optimal either. This seems to presuppose an economy for this type of settlement as predominantly agricultural, often with the addition of other nearby resources, particularly fishing. External factors have caused Shetland to have limited agricultural resources and typical agricultural settlement types will have to adapt to the Shetland conditions. *Bólstaðr*-settlements appear to have had exactly this property of adaptation.

Whether it is the special Shetland conditions or not which have caused the surveyed settlements there to be primarily detached *B1*-type secondary settlements (54% of all settlements surveyed), is hard to say. In one way it would be natural to expect more *B1* type settlements; the generally low quality of the Shetland soil does not normally further a splitting up of the already limited amount of land. On the other hand, it may be possible that the application in Shetland of the generic ON *bólstaðr*, m., was normally to the settlements of *B1* type – in other words a development from the original Norwegian type. Nevertheless, since 38% of the surveyed names are *B2* and *B3* type settlements, this theory of a development from the original seems rather uncertain. The arguments for this are at best inconclusive.

The Shetland in which the Scandinavians settled was already a cultural landscape. The previous inhabitants, the Picts, would probably already have utilised the land to almost the same extent as the new settlers came to do. Therefore, it can be assumed that when the need for settlement expansion arose, the easiest thing to do would be to set up farm on land already utilised by the former Pictish inhabitants in the vicinity of the primary settlement.

Can this supposition be tested? Archaeological remains may help give us some impression. The database of *The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland*<sup>126</sup> lists archaeological and historical remains at 22 of the *bólstaðr*-settlements. Several of these settlements have numerous remains listed. Most of the remains listed, however, pertain to the Viking-Age and later and are as such not of interest to this study. The remains of interest are the ones concerned with the pre-Viking Age inhabitants. Remains such as brochs (circular Pictish fortification structures), burnt mounds, cairns, souterrains, Celtic monastic sites,

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126. Found on the Internet at: <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/>

pre-Viking house structures and pre-Viking tools and artefacts, etc. Such remains have been found at 15 of the settlements. Most of the pre-Viking remains do not signal direct human settlement. Burnt mounds and cairns, for instance, only signal human activity in the area, not settlement. Features like house structures and artefacts associated with human settlement are more important here. Only 6 of the settlements featured brochs, pre-Viking-Age house structures and artefacts, and half of these settlements are *B2*-type settlements. This means that there is no serious conclusive evidence speaking in favour of *bólstaðr*-settlements having been established on land already settled by former inhabitants. However, many show remains of pre-Viking-Age human activity – a fact which is not surprising taking into account the limited amount of farming land available.

In conclusion, settlements whose names originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m., display typical secondary features but are normally largish establishments. The settlement type is found with all three types of secondary expansion. The normal type of secondary expansion in Shetland is that pertaining to *B1*-type settlements. There is no firm evidence for this being a development from the original which favoured *B1* and *B2* type of settlements almost equally. The reason for *B1*-type settlements being in the majority should be seen in the light of the general low fertility of the Shetland soil and the sparse amount of it. Secondary settlements were less likely to be carved out of the main arable of primary settlements. It must be borne in mind that *bólstaðr*-settlements are farming-settlements with a high focus on cultivation and thus make rather intensive use of arable land. Hence, *B2*-type *bólstaðr*-settlements would be too land-consuming for the primary settlement to be able to survive its carving up. This could also be the reason for the relatively frequent occurrence of *B3*-type settlements in Shetland. There is, therefore, no firm proof of a difference or development from the original Norwegian *bólstaðr*-settlement types.

## 6.4. Analysis of the topographical survey

There is a clear correspondence in application of ON *bólstaðr*, m., between *Sogn og Fjordanel/Møre og Romsdal* and *Shetland*. In both areas, the settlements surveyed were of typical secondary type (*B*). In neither area did the settlements in question show clear primary characteristics (*A*) and only 3 of the 37 Shetland examples could be regarded as peripheral

settlements (C).<sup>127</sup> In this respect, there is no development from the original Norwegian application to that in the colonial areas.

The types of secondary settlement, however, vary from the Norwegian context to Shetland. Of the three types of secondary settlements (*B1*, *B2* & *B3*) the surveyed settlements in *Sogn og Fjordane* and *Møre og Romsdal* only belonged to the categories of *B1* and *B2*. There are slightly more settlements of the *B1* category (52.5%) than of the *B2* category (47.5%). Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the settlements had come into existence as the result of a splitting up of a primary settlement's available land into smaller portions, as the *B1* settlements were exclusively found up-valley from primary settlements. The valleys cannot but have been a constituent part of the economy of the primary settlements. The settlements typically have a fair, but limited, amount of arable land. The soil type is typically a brown soil type (50% of all settlements) of medium quality (in 53% of the cases). The focus of sustenance must be said to be almost wholly agricultural. Access to the sea does not seem to play any significant part in the situation of settlements of this type. On average the distance to access to the sea is 4,4 km – a fair distance if the sea was of economic or any other importance.

In Shetland, all three types of secondary settlement can be found. As with the settlements surveyed in the *Sogn og Fjordane/Møre og Romsdal* area, the *B1* category is the most commonly occurring one. Some 54% of the settlements belong to this category. The *B2* category settlements form 19% of the settlements. The same amount, 19%, of the total are *B3* cate-

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127. The settlements in question are *Cooperston*, former *Skjentabister* and the Weisdale settlements *Evrabister* and *Nedrabister*.

The former name of *Cooperston* is recorded by Stewart (1982, p. 55). *Skjentabister* might be a later name in Shetl. *bister*, sb. However, the specific seems to be a now-lost river name \**Slenta*, f. Name-typologically speaking, river names are not combined with analogical *-bister*, so on this assumption alone it is altogether more plausible that *Skjentabister*, present *Cooperston*, may be an original ON *bólstaðr*-name, or at least a remnant of one.

The present inferior status of *Evrabister* and *Nedrabister* is comparatively recent. These two settlements were originally large farms with high tax-values. Now, however, they are no more than small houses. Furthermore, *Nedrabister*, as a name, is completely unknown in the area. Their present status is the result of a massive reallocation in the area, lands of the settlements having in recent times become part of the neighbouring Kergord estate. Even much of the building material for the manor-house is known to originate from the site of *Evrabister*. Had *Evrabister* and *Nedrabister* retained their original status, they would be fine examples of *B2* category settlements. (Information supplied by Brian Smith, Shetland archives).



gory settlements. The remaining 8% of the settlements belong to category C (see footnote above). Unlike in Norway, the *B1* category names are not typically found up-valley from the primary settlement but rather further along the coast. Nevertheless, these sites are normally inferior to their nearby primary settlements, so there can be little doubt as to their secondary nature. The settlements surveyed have typically a fair, but limited, amount of land available. Much is normally arable but a fair portion of pastoral land is often found, too. The arable land normally consists of boulder clay (27%) or of boulder clay mixed with undifferentiated glacial drift (46%). Owing to the generally low fertility and difficulty of cultivation of these soil types, the soil quality is generally classed as poor for this type of settlement. In a local context, the settlements themselves, however, are often situated on some of the more fertile land of the township. Again the focus appears to be on a farming economy, although some amount of additional income, e.g. from fishing, must be considered necessary with some of the settlements.

On the face of it, it could look as if the settlement structure varies from *Shetland* to *Sogn og Fjordane/Møre og Romsdal*, that there has been a development in a colonial context. There has been an extension in the range of secondary settlement types and the soil is generally poorer in *Shetland*. However, it must be noted that the farming land in *Sogn og Fjordane* and *Møre og Romsdal* is generally of a superior quality, as it is more plentiful and more easily cultivated as compared with that in *Shetland*. Therefore, one should be very careful about attempting to draw any conclusions on any development of the settlement application on, at least, comparisons of soil quality and soil type between the areas studied. The material is much too inconclusive for this.

All in all, it appears that the settlement application is the same for settlements whose name originates from ON *bólstaðr*, m., in both areas surveyed. ON *bólstaðr*, m., has been bestowed as a generic on farm settlements which have been created as the result of a splitting up of the available land of a primary settlement into smaller sections. These settlements have originally been fairly substantial and typical agricultural farms, even to the extent that the post-Medieval reflex of the name of this type of settlement, *-bister*, re-entered the onomasticon and came to form place-name constructions on analogy with the reflexes of original *bólstaðr* place-names. By this time, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and onwards, the available arable land had largely been occupied and only very minor settlements developed, which is why we see this name-type used only with peripheral settlements.

## 7. Categorisation and classification of the place-name material

### 7.1. The syntactic-semantic model of categorisation

Any place-name can be categorised according to semantic content. There are two main types of semantic classification: one is a *word-semantic* classification; and the other is the *name-semantic* classification. With the *word-semantic* classification system, a word that forms part of a place-name is categorised according to the semantic category to which it belongs (settlements, inhabitants-designations, topography, animals, plants, etc.). With the *name-semantic* classification, the individual name is classified according to the semantic categories that correspond to the motives of the naming person(s) when coining a given place-name.

There is a great difference between the function a word has in the language and its function as an element of a place-name. If a word appears as a type-stating generic in a place-name, it retains its normal classifying function. If, on the other hand, it appears as the specific element in a place-name, its function is to indicate a characteristic of the location to which it refers. The advantage of a *name-semantic* analysis is that it says something about the motives and intentions behind the naming of a given locality. In this way a more genuine picture of how a name should be interpreted can be constructed.

The Finnish scholar Kurt Zilliacus introduced the *name-semantic* model in 1966 as a reaction to the other classification models mentioned above.<sup>128</sup> In his work, "Ortnamnen i Houtskär", Zilliacus writes that the real purpose of a *name-semantic* analysis is to find out what is the connotative signification of a given place-name. In other words, to find out what the individual elements of language forming part of a place-name say about the locality to which it refers.<sup>129</sup> The framework for a *name-semantic* analysis is the *signification* of a given place-name. It is for the place-name researcher to interpret the name from the point of view of the namer.

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128. Zilliacus, Kurt, 'Ortnamnen i Houtskär', in *SNF* 55, (Helsinki, 1966), pp. 5-295.

129. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

This is done, first and foremost, by a formal analysis of the various parts of which the place-name consists. When this has been done, it is possible to make a *name-semantic* analysis of the place-name. A *name-semantic* analysis is based on: 1) an examination of whichever elements or linguistic expressions a given place-name consists of and what the exact signification of each linguistic element is; 2) an assessment of the combined descriptive content of the entire linguistic designation making up the place-name.<sup>130</sup>

The classification model which Zilliacus has constructed in order to interpret place-names on the criteria laid down above has three categories, which are again divided into 16 sub-categories. The first category is that of *Relationship*, which is divided into 8 sub-categories: *unity, absolute situation, relative situation, direction, affiliation, source, loose (regular) relationship, event*. The second category is *Quality*, which has 7 sub-categories: *(relative) size, shape, colour, other quality, material, that which exists at or by, that which usually happens at/on*. The third and last category is called *Function* and consists of the sub-category of *usage*.

The name-material on which Zilliacus has based his findings is largely modern. This means that the motives for naming were known in by far the majority of cases at the time when Zilliacus recorded his material. But since much place-name material is considerably older than the material on which Zilliacus based his semantic model, the model has been criticised for being of little use with the majority of name material. The main argument has been that it is not possible to make a clear-cut distinction between the sub-groups in Zilliacus' model when the actual motives for naming are not known.<sup>131</sup> However, Zilliacus' semantic model does hold one great advantage over other classification models for place-names: it classifies according to the actual motives behind naming. To me, this advantage clearly outweighs the uncertainties inherent in his semantic model. A number of scholars have tried out this model on their place-name material.<sup>132</sup> In common for all these attempts is the result that Zilliacus'

130. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

131. Cf. e.g. Rostvik, Allan, 'Om klassificering av ortnamn', in *NoB* 57, (Uppsala, 1969), pp. 112-32.

132. Cf. e.g. Holmberg, Bente, *Stednavne som kulturhistorisk kilde. En samfærdselshistorisk undersøgelse*, (Copenhagen, 1980); Albøge, Gordon, 'Om navnekategorier og semantik', in *NoB* 81, (Uppsala, 1993), pp. 5-32; Andersen, Margrethe Heidemann, *Marknavne og oldtidsminder på Møn*, (an unpublished M.A.-thesis of the University of Copenhagen, 1997).

structure is not fully applicable and needs to be modified. Especially Gordon Albøge has tried to modify Zilliacus' ideas.<sup>133</sup> Although his attempt may be criticised on some points, it is, nevertheless, an interesting development of Zilliacus' semantic model and shows that it is possible to apply the semantic model constructively even to older name material.

The model used in this book derives in its basic structure from Zilliacus' original idea with 3 main categories. Each category is divided into a number of sub-categories. I hope that with this model I have eliminated the worst of the uncertainties and reservations connected with Zilliacus' original semantic model. I have not tampered with Zilliacus' basic structure, but the sub-categories have all been subjected to a thorough revision in order to obtain a greater clarity of analysis of my particular material. I do not claim that this structure is universal in any way, except in that the general structure can be used with any place-name material.

Since my material is limited to names that contain one particular generic element, the *name-semantic* analysis will be employed to detect variation in naming patterns from region to region (and from layer to layer wherever such exist). In this way it should be possible to detect differences in naming patterns and not least to form general conclusions as to the connotations of the generic element at the time of naming. The *name-semantic* model is built up in the following way:

## **I. RELATIONSHIP**

### **a. Topographical relationship**

- i. Characterisation of the location in relation to a name-bearing location.
- ii. Characterisation of the location in relation to a non-name-bearing location.
- iii. Characterisation of the location by means of its relative position.

### **b. Institutional and administrative relationship**

### **c. Associative relationship**

### **d. An external event to which naming is related**

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133. Albøge, Gordon, 'Om navnekategorier og semantik', in *NoB* 81, (Uppsala, 1993), pp. 5-32.

## II. QUALITY

- a. Size
- b. Shape
- c. Colour
- d. Age
- e. Material and texture
- f. That which exists at or by
  - i. Creatures
  - ii. Plant-growth
  - iii. Inanimate objects
- g. Perceived qualities

## III. USAGE

**I. RELATIONSHIP:** This main category consists of specific elements that indicate a relationship of sorts to the location. Relationship can be viewed as being: a) topographical, b) institutional or administrative, c) associative, or d) an external event to which naming is related. This group is, therefore, divided into four sub-categories, each dealing with a special aspect of Relationship.

**a. Topographical relationship:** The location is characterised by its situation in comparison with another location. This other location may be name-bearing or not. Topographical relationship is divided into the following groups:

i. Characterisation of the location in relation to a name-bearing location: The location is characterised by its relationship to another location, which has a name, i.e. the specific is itself a place-name. Examples are: the ON island-name \**Súla*, f., in *Sulebust*, Norway (Sulebust is situated on the island of Sula); and possibly ON \**Varða*, f., in *Warbister*, Hoy & Graemsay, Orkney (Warbister is situated at the foot of Ward Hill).

ii. Characterisation of the location in relation to a non-name-bearing location: The location is characterised by its relationship to a location without a name. The specifics of this group are usually characterised by appellatives with topographical significance but occasionally by appellatives denoting a man-made object. Examples are: ON *kambr*, m., 'a ridge, hill-crest' in *Camster* (2), Caithness; or ON *vatn*, n., 'water, a lake' in *Wadbister* (4), Shetland.

iii. Characterisation of the location by means of its relative position. The location is characterised by its position in comparison with a focal locality/localities, that is in relation to the four compass directions, up-

down, in-out, upper, uppermost, etc. The specific is usually an adverbial of direction. Examples are: ON *austr*, adv., 'east', in *Eastbister*, Orkney; ON *efri*, comp. adj., 'upper' in *Eorrabus*, Islay; ON *hár*, adj., 'high' in *Hobbelstad*, Norway; ON *úti*, adv., 'out, outside' in *Utbostad*, Norway.

**b. Institutional and administrative relationship:** The location is characterised by its association with institutional or administrative units, for example state, county, diocese, parish, objects of devotion, etc. The appellatives *school*, *church*, *farm*, *court*, *assembly*, and so forth, may refer to actual buildings – in which case they belong under II.f.iii. or I.a.ii. On the other hand, they may refer to school, church, farm, court or assembly as being institutional or administrative units. In the case of the latter reference there is not necessarily a topographical relationship. Devotion to religious personae such as *God*, *Jesus*, *the Virgin Mary*, *St. Peter*, *St. John*, *St. Andrew*, *Thor*, *Ull*, *Freyr*, etc., all probably demanded an institutionalised setting. A specific which is the name of the god or saint, signifies some sort of devotion at the location to the specified god or saint.

The specifics in this group often refer to original ownership of an institutional or administrative unit or to the devotion of a location to a religious institution. Examples are: ON *kirkja*, f., 'a church' in *Kirkabister*, Bressay, Shetland (the location contains the site of St. John's Chapel) and ON *vé*, n., 'a place where sacrifice takes place', in *Vebbestad*, Norway.

**c. Associative relationship of a location:** The location is characterised by its association with a person or a group of people. The specifics of this sub-category are always either personal names or appellatives which denote a person or a group of persons. The relationships of this category are multiple and can only rarely be specified. However, they will most often be that of ownership, association of a permanent, occasional, or momentary nature, or of origination at a location. An event in which a person has been involved may also have motivated the naming. The affiliation may be historical or fictional. The common denominator of this category is that the location has been associated with a person or a group of people at the time of its naming. Examples are: ON *Bersi*, m., in *Bessebostad*, Norway; ON *Hedinn*, m., in *Hensbister*, Orkney; ON *þræll*, m., 'a thrall, serf' as possibly in *Trebostad*, Norway.

**d. An external event to which naming is related:** The location is characterised by an external event to which the location has been related. This is a rare and small group and made up mainly of disputes of sorts over a location. The only example I have been able to find at all in my material is OSw *þrätta*, f., 'a dispute' in *Trädbollstad*, Finland (cf. Ch. 8).

**II. QUALITY:** This category contains all the specifics which emphasise a characteristic of the location. The characteristic that has spurred the naming of a location is either real or apparent. The characteristic need only have been of relevance at the time of naming and must be confined to the location itself. This category is divided into the following seven sub-categories:

**a. Size:** Terms which refer to the size of a location are placed here. Examples are: ON *lítill*, adj., 'little, small' in e.g. *Lillebolstad*, Hedmark fylke, Norway; *mikill*, adj., 'large, great' in e.g. *Myklebostad*, Vistdal sokn., Møre og Romsdal fylke, Norway.

**b. Shape:** The shape of a location will normally be stated in terms of length and width. A location can be long, short, wide, narrow, straight, bent, round, flat and steep, etc. Examples are: ON *brattr*, adj., 'steep' in *Brattebolstad*, Norway; ON *breiðr*, adj., 'wide' in e.g. *Breibister*, Shetland; ON *flatr*, adj., 'flat, plane' in *Fladdabister*, Shetland.

**c. Colour:** The colour of a location has relevance only at the time of naming and may be characteristic of the entire location or only part of it. Examples are: ON *grár*, adj., 'grey', as in e.g. *Grobolls*, Islay, and ON *myrkr*, adj., 'dark' in *Mirbister*, Orkney.

**d. Age:** Terms which refer to the age of a location are placed in this sub-category. Examples: ON *forn*, adj., 'old' in *Fonnebost*, Norway, and ON *nýr*, adj., 'new', as in *Neebister*, Orkney.

**e. Material and texture:** The soil on a location may contain some special substance or have a characteristic texture. Furthermore, a man-made feature may be built of a certain material. There may be gravel, clay, sand or limestone in the soil. The ground may be dry, sharp or have been burnt (for clearance). A house may have a slate roof, be constructed of bricks or be ruined. A well may be stone-lined, etc. Examples are: ON *grjót*, n., 'gravel', as in the doubtful *Grotpoldo*, Island of Coll; ON *leirr*, m., 'clay, mud' as in e.g. *Lurabus*, Kildalton & Oa, Islay.

**f. That which exists at or by:** In this sub-category naming is concerned with what is found at a location. This sub-category is divided into three groups:

**i. Creatures:** The location is characterised by what creatures exist there. Naming is determined by a certain creature either seen at or known or believed to live at the location. This includes occasional, rare or unusual visits by animals. A creature should be seen as any non-human being, ranging from animals to beings of the underworld. Examples are: ON *hross*, n., 'a horse' in *Roster*, Caithness; *hundr*, m., 'a dog' in *Humster*, Caithness; ON *ulfr*, m., 'a wolf' in e.g. *Ullebust*, Norway, etc.

ii. Plant-growth: The location is characterised by what grows there. This group is made up of specifics that relate to a characteristic rooted growth at a location. The specifics are plant designations for trees (or a single out-standing tree), brushwood, flowers, herbs, grain, grasses, etc. Examples are: ON *hrís*, n., 'brushwood' in *Risabus*, Islay; ON *selja*, f., 'a willow', as in e.g. *Sellibister*, Orkney, etc.

iii. Inanimate features: The location is characterised by a feature at the location – natural or man-made. This group comprises appellatives which signify such diverse features as fields, bogs, pools, wells, bears' dens, snake-pits, walls, gates, boundary markers, mounds, wards, seamarks, mile-stones, turn-pikes, crosses, houses, halls and churches, etc. The features to which this group refers must in all cases be confined to the location only. Examples are: ON *akr*, m., 'a field', as in e.g. *Aikerbister*, Orkney; ON *hús*, n., 'a house', as in e.g. *Husabost*, North Uist, Inverness-shire; ON *kelda*, f., 'a spring' in *Keldabister*, Shetland; ON *kross*, m., 'a cross', as in e.g. Crossbost, Lewis, Ross-shire; ON *steinn*, m., 'a stone, a standing-stone', as in *Stemster*, Caithness.

It may be difficult to ascertain whether a specific with a topographical or architectural significance belongs here or under I.a.ii. or I.b. – in some cases even impossible. For instance, how does the church in \**Kirkjubólstaðr* connect to the location? Is the church in topographical relationship to the location (i.e. *bólstaðr* near a church (I.a.ii.))? Does a church own the location (i.e. *bólstaðr* of a church (I.b.))? Is the church the most characteristic feature of the location (i.e. *bólstaðr* with a church building (II.f.iii.))? As a rule of thumb, if the feature referred to is of such a size it can easily fit within the bounds of a location, it is not viewed in relation to, but as a quality of, a location. If the location, however, bears the name in which an architectural appellative is the specific element and does not have such a feature on it or near it, the architectural appellative signifies institutional or administrative relationship.

g. Perceived qualities: The naming of a location is guided by a certain perceived quality such as its smell, its temperature, its visibility or lack of the same from a particular point, its exposure to the elements, etc. Examples are: ON *full*, adj., 'stinking, rotten smelling', in *Foubister*, Orkney, and ON *kaldr*, adj., 'cold' in *Calbost*, Lewis, Ross-shire.

III. USAGE: The location is characterised by its usage. The concept of Usage should be viewed as widely as possible. This category contains the specifics of utilisation. These mark out the utilisation of a location as e.g. a meeting-place, a resting-place, a milking-place, a beacon, etc., at the



time of naming. Examples are: ON *helgi*, adj., 'holy', as in e.g. *Helgebostad*, Holt sn., Akershus fylke, Norway, and possibly ON *þruma*, f., 'land, soil', in *Thrumster*, Caithness.

## 7.2. The syntactic-semantic categorisation of the Norwegian *bólstaðr* material

The Norwegian place-name material totals 108 examples. Of these 14 are simplex *bólstaðr*-formations and the remaining 94 are compound formations. It should be noted that place-names of the *\*Miklabólstaðr*- and *\*Helgabólstaðr*-type are problematic. There are no less than 47 examples of the former type and 13 of the latter in Norway. Seen in isolation, place-names of the *\*Miklabólstaðr* type account for almost half of all Norwegian *bólstaðr* place-names! An over-frequency of this magnitude is worrying, and it raises doubts as to whether these are place-names of the same type as the other place-names in ON *bólstaðr*.

From a formal point of view, it is possible to explain this over-frequency in a number of ways, either as: 1) a genuine primary place-name formation; 2) as an analogical formation (either imitative or associative); 3) or as a compound appellative, such as e.g. *\*miklabólstaðr*. The following paragraphs will investigate the various possibilities and weigh them against each other. I will concentrate on place-names in *\*Miklabólstaðr*, as this is the largest group of names, but the conclusions reached for this *bólstaðr* type will in essence also be true for the *\*Helgabólstaðr* type and other *bólstaðr* types of over-frequency.

Considering the first possibility, that place-names of the *\*Miklabólstaðr* type are genuine primary place-name formations, it would be fitting to see the specific element as a reciprocating element. According to Zilliacus, the naming motive of size should normally indicate the relative size of the locality in relation to another locality.<sup>134</sup> In other words, place-names containing a size-indicating specific should generally be seen as forming the one part in a contrastive pair (*Big-x* vs. *Small-x*). The obvious element with which to reciprocate would be 'little, small'. However, this is not the case, as there are only a few *bólstaðr*-names in *Lille*-, and none of those can be said to reciprocate with *\*Miklabólstaðr*. In fact, *bólstaðr*-names never occur in pairs in Norway and only rarely are there two *bólstaðr* localities within the same parish, so it is obvious that the size cannot in

134. Zilliacus, Kurt, 'Ortnamnen i Houtskär', in *SNF* 55, (Helsinki, 1966), p. 213.

this case be seen in relation to another place-name of the same type. Instead, it can be argued that the size is to be seen in relation to neighbouring localities. This seems to have been the case in most of the instances in which size has been a naming motive with this place-name element. It is only in the Finnish material that four names form (two) contrastive pairs, and these should possibly rather be seen as individual instances rather than being typical. In this respect, it is probably also worth taking into account the fact that in areas where *bólstaðr*-names are often found in pairs, such as in *Scotia Scandinavica*, the naming motive relating to size is virtually absent. It must therefore be assumed that naming according to size is not primarily to relate the relative size of the *bólstaðr* locality in contrast to a similar *bólstaðr* locality, but to relate the relative size of the *bólstaðr* locality to non-*bólstaðr* localities in the vicinity. Under all circumstances, there is no formal reason why place-names in the *\*Miklabólstaðr* group cannot be genuine formations. Instead, it is the large number of names which is worrying, a number which may theoretically simply reflect its relevance in the naming situation.

It is also possible to view this group of names as analogical formations. Analogy of varying types and degrees seems to have played a factor in the coining of some of the material in this present work, so this is certainly a possibility also to be taken into account. Unfortunately, the concept of analogy is not straightforward, as it has developed into an umbrella term for a number of different onomastic mechanisms. In my view, the material of this book contains or may contain three different types of analogy. One type of analogy is the so-called 'analogical affix name-formation'. This type of analogy has been evidenced in the place-name material of the Northern Isles and Caithness (see Appendix 1). This is a type of analogy that occurs when the generic element of a new place-name owes its presence in the coinage solely to analogy with its occurrence in existing place-names.<sup>135</sup> But since this discussion focuses on the over-frequency of place-names in *\*Miklabólstaðr*, this type of analogy is not relevant here.

Instead, we have to consider the mechanisms by which the name of one locality is transferred to another. It goes without saying that the original place-name on which new place-names are modelled must be considered a genuine formation. Conversely formations modelled on a genuine place-

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135. Pamp, Bengt, 'Onomastisk Analogi', in Albøge, G. et al. (eds), *Norna-Rapporter 45. Analogi i navngivning*, (Uppsala, 1991), p. 159.

name construction must be considered as being analogical. What guides analogical naming? As I see it, a name transfer may theoretically take place either on a factual basis or purely by association. Simplistically speaking, the first of these types of analogy steps into force if the knowledge of a place-name, *Wood Hill*, spurs the naming of a wooded hill as *Wood Hill* and not e.g. *Oak Wood*, *Pine Hill*, or any other name. Here the new name *imitates* the structure of a known entity with a basis in factual conditions that could necessitate such a name, but the known structure excludes other possibilities of naming. The second type of analogy becomes active when the knowledge of a place-name, *Wood Hill*, spurs the naming of any other locality *Wood Hill*, be that a house, a farm, a forest, a hill, etc. Here naming is guided wholly by *association*; i.e. by motives other than factual ones. The namer may think that it sounds good, or awakes memories of an event or series of events, or simply that it is a name as good as any other name. In the case of what I have chosen to call *imitative naming*, the necessary conditions have to be present in order for naming to occur, whereas this need not be the case with *associative naming*. Naturally, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish *imitative naming* from genuine naming, as the named feature will be similar in both cases. The difference between *imitative naming* and genuine naming lies in whether or not there are restrictions in the naming process. In the case of *associative naming* the naming process is free from considerations of factuality and the name may be transferred to any type of locality. Such a locality may or may not be similar to the original model, but ought in a number of instances to show marked differences.

From a purely onomastic point of view, the over-frequency of place-names in *\*Miklabólstaðr* (and other over-frequent *bólstaðr*-types) could be seen as a result of either type of name transfer. The only way of distinguishing between these two types of analogy is by resorting to extra-onomastic evidence, such as e.g. topographical studies. However, a topographical study would only permit the singling out of *associatively* bestowed names from other coinages, genuine as well as *imitative*, so such a study would only be able to reveal a rough outline of motives for naming. In the topographical study I have made of the *bólstaðr* localities in Western Norway, I have not been able to find any localities with names in *\*Miklabólstaðr* which did not conform to the general topographical characteristics of Norwegian *bólstaðr* localities. Although this does not directly exclude the possibility that *associative naming* has taken place, it is an indication that factual considerations of one kind or another were associated with the naming of these localities. Whether the actual naming, if

*associative naming* did not take place, was genuine or imitative is impossible to say, owing to the close similarities between the two.

The third possibility is to see the many over-frequent names themselves as originating from a compound appellative *\*miklabólstaðr*. This appellative would then function as a normal place-name element, being capable of taking part in place-name constructions on its own (as a simplex formation), or as part of a compound place-name. As an appellative *\*miklabólstaðr* would probably carry a meaning along the lines of 'the large farm' and would be an integral part of the lexicon. Being an integral and well-known part of the lexicon, it would also have to have general currency throughout the speech area while it formed part of the onomasticon. An example of a probable compound appellative in function as a place-name is *\*kirkjubyr*, 'settlement with a church'.<sup>136</sup> This compound appellative was possibly created in England by the incoming Scandinavians who found stone-built churches on their arrival there. No fewer than 46 place-names of this origin have been known to exist in England.<sup>137</sup> This compound appellative may later have been transported to Denmark, where it is still current today in the sense 'village in which the parish church is situated',<sup>138</sup> as well as having been frequently used in place-names.<sup>139</sup> For instance, there are 35 place-names in *Kirkeby* on the 1:100,000 map of Denmark. In other words, *kirkeby* is an integral part of the lexicon with pregnancy of meaning, as well as having general currency throughout the Old Danish speech-area, insofar that it is found in place-names both in Denmark and the Danelaw area.

It is tempting to see place-names of the *\*Miklabólstaðr* type as originating from a compound appellative construction, as this would readily explain the over-frequency itself. With 47 examples, about half of all place-names in *-bólstaðr*, the appellative *\*miklabólstaðr* functioning as place-name would seem to have been of equal relevance to the Viking-

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136. Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, 'Mønstre i stednavne på -by i England', in Kruken, Kristoffer (ed.), *NORNA-Rapporter 60. Den ellefte nordiske navneforskerkongressen, Sundvollen 19.-23. Juni 1994*, (Uppsala, 1996), p. 387.

137. Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, 'The Vikings' Relationship with Christianity in the British Isles: the Evidence of Place-Names Containing the Element *kirkja*', in Knirk, James (ed.), *Proceedings of the Tenth Viking Congress, Larkollen, Norway, 1985*, (Oslo, 1987), p. 298.

138. Cf. *ODS*, vol. x, col. 365.

139. Alternatively, the compound may have arisen in Denmark independently of the names in England.

Age Norwegian as that of the place-name element ON *bólstaðr* itself. With 260 examples of place-names in *-bólstaðr* in Scotland and Iceland, one would therefore expect to find well over a hundred place-names in *\*Miklabólstaðr* in this area. Reality, however, is different. Not a single place-name of this type is to be found in either country! It becomes even more perplexing, when one considers that place-names in ON *bólstaðr* often occur in pairs in Scotia Scandinavica, where it must be assumed that one of the two *bólstaðr*-settlements, at least in some instances, was bigger than the other. The same is the case with the other over-frequent *bólstaðr*-types, such as the 13 Norwegian place-names in *\*Helgabólstaðr* and the 23 Scottish and Icelandic *Breidabólstaðr* names. Neither of these formations is found throughout the entire speech area but only in limited areas thereof. In other words, these *bólstaðr*-types do not seem likely to have had general currency in the onomasticon, let alone having formed an integral part of the lexicon. The likelihood of these *bólstaðr*-types originating from possible compound appellatives, such as *\*miklabólstaðr*, *\*helgabólstaðr*, *\*breidabólstaðr*, respectively, must be considered small (especially when it is taken into account that no such appellatives have ever been recorded).

The Icelandic scholar, Svavar Sigmundsson, has argued that Icelandic place-names in *Breidabólstaðr* were probably analogical formations but bestowed in an objective fashion. According to him, the choice guiding place-name formation is not free. Certain constituents become favoured and these then form certain patterns of naming.<sup>140</sup> It is plausible that this may have been the case with a number of over-frequent names. For instance, if a certain place-name compound is bestowed as a genuine place-name formation upon a number of different localities, then its mere frequency of occurrence could generate super-relevance in a naming situation. If this happens, the naming-process shifts from being free to being restricted by the super-relevance offered by this particular place-name compound, should the relevant conditions be present at the locality undergoing naming. In other words naming becomes *imitative*. That naming is often guided by *imitative* factors is especially evident with the place-name type ON *bólstaðr*. Naming according to certain patterns seems to be evident in a number of cases in the Scottish *bólstaðr* material. A well-illustrated example is the curious difference between Shetland and Orkney in compounding ON *bólstaðr* with the appellative ON *vatn*, n., 'water, a lake'. In Shetland, all the examples of this type show forms with *vatn* in

140. Sigmundsson, Svavar, 'Analogi i islandske stednavne', in Albøge, G. *et al.* (eds), *Nornarapporter 45. Analogi i navngivning*, (Uppsala, 1991), p. 193.

the stem form (*Wadbister*), whereas the Orkney examples all have forms with *vatn* in the genitive singular (*Wasbister*). These two archipelagos are not far removed from each other as such, but sufficiently far to spur differences in naming patterns. Accidental discrepancies in the compounding of ON *vatn* and ON *bólstaðr* in Shetland and Orkney seem to have spurred different naming patterns by their local super-relevance.

As the above study of over-frequent place-name types has shown, there are no easy solutions. However, since the general distribution of *\*Mikla-bólstaðr* place-names and their locational features are similar to that of other *bólstaðr* place-names, analogy by *associative naming* does not appear to be likely. The over-frequent *bólstaðr* types only occur in relatively limited areas and not throughout the entire speech area, so an origin as a compound appellative does not seem plausible either. In reality, the over-frequency found with some *bólstaðr* place-names can only really be ascribed to their being partly genuine place-name constructions, and partly *imitative* names. Since there is no traceable difference in denotation between either type of naming (naming would have taken place on factual grounds in both cases), I see no other possibility than to treat these as genuine place-name constructions. However, it must be borne in mind that other naming motives, especially *imitative naming*, may well lie behind place-names of this type. Therefore, due care and consideration should be taken when treating these over-frequent *bólstaðr*-types.

The major work of documentary reference I have consulted is *Norske Gaardnavne* (Kristiania/Oslo, 1897-1936), by Olaf Rygh et. al. This work contains a large number of source-forms, and the Norwegian source-forms featured in the present book are from *Norske Gaardnavne*. Whatever forms I have been able to check (e.g. *DN*, *OC* and partly *OEJ*) corresponded very well with what Rygh had cited. This is hardly surprising, as Rygh points out in the introduction<sup>141</sup> that he has been most careful to note down the exact form in which a place-name appears in an older source (such as *AB*, *BK*, *Cap.*, *DN*, *NRJ*, *OEJ*, *RB*, or *St.*). However, Rygh does quote a number of place-name forms without a proper source-reference. These source-forms typically date from the period between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. I have chosen to include these forms in this work as they have been quoted by Rygh, although their presence goes against the general principle adhered to in the book, that a source-form must always have a reference against which it may be checked. From Rygh's introduction to his

141. Rygh, Olaf, *Norske Gaardnavne. Forord og Indledning*, (Kristiania, 1898), p. xi. (NG indl.)

work, it is clear that the unreferenced sources are almost exclusively cadastre rolls and census papers, most of which have never been published. Despite the fact that I have not been able to check these unreferenced sources, I have regarded them as reliable, albeit Rygh himself states that he has occasionally normalised the endings of names.<sup>142</sup>

The Norwegian place-name material is some of the oldest in this book. Although this has not been a problem in the majority of cases, a few place-names have, nonetheless, proved themselves to be difficult to interpret, mostly owing to their late date of recording. Indeed, in three instances, namely in the cases of *Ormbostad* and the two *Rubbestad* place-names, interpretation has been marred by the material's being too slim or too contradictory. The bodies of work I have used to define the interpretable place-name elements are Johan Fritzner's *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*,<sup>143</sup> and the *ONP*, to the extent it has been published.<sup>144</sup> These are generally accepted as being the most authoritative ON dictionaries.

Of the 108 place-names in ON *bólstaðr*, the 14 simplex formations will not be included in the following syntactic-semantic analysis, since their unmodified appearance is not able to convey what motives for naming were present at the time of coinage. Furthermore, the three place-names that remain uninterpreted are not included either, for obvious reasons. Not all groups and sub-groups of the syntactic-semantic model are represented in the Norwegian place-name material suitable for this type of analysis. The missing groups are: *I.d.*; *II.c.*, *II.e.*, *II.f.ii.*, *II.f.iii.*, *II.g.* No further reference will be made to these groups and sub-groups.

## Syntactic-semantic analysis of the Norwegian *bólstaðr*-place-name material

### I. RELATIONSHIP

#### a. Topographical relationship

##### i. Characterisation of the location in relation to a name-bearing location.

There are six place-names in the Norwegian material whose specific element probably indicates the situation of the locality in relation to a named location. The named locations may either be fiords, as is reflected by the

142. *Ibid.*

143. Fritzner, Johan, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, (Kristiania, 1886-96); *Rettelser og tillæg*, (Oslo, 1972).

144. *ONP*: Degnbol, H., Jacobsen, B. C., Rode, E., Sanders, C. & Helgadóttir, P. (eds), *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* = *A dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, (Copenhagen: The Arnamagnæan Commission, 1989-), vol. 1-.



ON place-name \**Farni*, m., and probably also in ON \**Geiga*, f.; water-courses, as probably seen in the place-name ON \**Gryta*, f., and ON \**Skjalga*, f.; or even islands: ON \**Súla*, f., and ON \**Veig*, f.

ii. *Characterisation of the location in relation to a non-name-bearing location.* Four names reflect a location in relation to an unnamed locality: ON *ár*, gen. sg. of *á*, f., 'a stream'; ON *eyði*, n., 'the condition of a place as being uninhabited or uncultivated'; ON *grandi*, m., 'a sand bank in or under the water'; ON *mýrr*, f., 'a moor, a bog'. It may be argued that ON *eyði*, n., does not belong to this sub-group. However, I have chosen to place it here because it may inherently describe the locality in relation to other localities by stating their non-presence.

iii. *Characterisation of the location by means of its relative position.* The specifics of thirteen place-names signal the approximate position of the locality in comparison with a focal point. The specific elements in this sub-group are typically adjectives and adverbs: ON *hár*, adj., 'high' (3); ON *meðal*, adv., 'between' (2); ON *miðr*, adj., 'in the middle of'; ON *norðr*, adv., 'north' (2); ON *norðri*, comp. adj., 'more northerly'; ON *úti*, adv., 'out, outside'; ON *vestr*, adv., 'west' (2); ON *øfri*, adj., 'upper'.

### **b. Institutional and administrative relationship**

There is only one place-name in the Norwegian place-name material which signals this type of relationship: ON *vé*, n., 'a holy place where sacrifice takes place'.

### **c. Associative relationship**

To this semantic group belong specific elements which signal the ownership of a locality, or another type of association of a person or group of persons thereto. The specific elements are typically originally in the genitive in order to describe the association of the locality with the person/persons. There are two names which reflect this relationship, one through the personal name, ON *Bersi*, m., the other through an appellative, ON *þræll*, m., 'a thrall, serf' (probably owing to the late appearance of this place-name in the sources, there is no remnant of a genitive sg./pl. marker).

## **II. QUALITY**

### **a. Size**

This group comprises no less than 50 names which indicate the size of the locality. The examples are: ON *lítill*, adj., 'small, little' (3), and ON *mikill*,



adj., 'large, great' (47). It is necessary, however, to bear in mind that the overrepresentation of *mikill*, adj., is problematic. There may be some instances which are not genuine primary name formations. It is curious that not a single one of the place-names which has *lítill* as a specific reciprocates with *mikill*.

#### **b. Shape**

There is only one example of the specific referring to the shape of the locality in this material. The form is in this example stated in comparative terms: ON *brattr*, adj., 'steep'.

#### **d. Age**

In this group the specific signals the age of the locality. There is only one example of this quality in the Norwegian material: ON *forn*, adj., 'old'.

#### **f. That which exists at or by**

*i. Creatures.* To this sub-group belong all creatures known to exist, or to have existed, at the locality. The creatures can be real as well as fictive, they may actually exist at the locality or merely be thought to exist there. In the material analysed for Norway, only one place-name can be said probably to contain a relevant specific, namely ON *ulfa*, gen. pl. of *ulfr*, m., 'a wolf'. It is not possible to say how long these wolves were known to exist at the locality, or even whether they actually existed or were just a figment of the imagination.

### **III. USAGE**

There are 12 place-names which indicate what the locality has been used for. In all cases the specific is ON *helgi*, weak decl. of *heilagr*, adj., 'holy'. What exact usage 'holy' refers to is not known, but it may refer to the locality as being utilised for cultic practice.

As I have mentioned earlier I have chosen to list the place-names of the *\*Miklabólstaðr*-type as genuine place-name formations, in spite of their possibly representing a different type of naming because of their over-frequency in the material. Despite careful study, I have not been able to detect any way in which localities of this type differ from other *bólstaðr* localities. Therefore, it cannot be positively proven that place-names of this type are different from other *bólstaðr* names. Hence, I see no other alternative than to regard these as genuine place-name formations, however unsatisfactory this may appear. The following summing up of what

the syntactic-semantic analysis indicates about the situation and focus of naming in *bólstaðr* must be seen in the light of this. All main motives of naming are present in the Norwegian material, as the three categories, *I. Relationship*, *II. Quality*, and *III. Usage*, are all exemplified to a greater or lesser extent in the specific material.

There are 26 place-names (approx. 29% of the analysed material) which indicate a relationship of the locality. The majority of these, 23 (approx. 25%), belong under group *I.a. Topographical relationship*, of which six place-names (approx. 7%) relate to a name-bearing location (sub-group *I.a.i.*), four (approx. 4%) to a non-name-bearing location (sub-group *I.a.ii.*), and 13 (approx. 14%) are characterised by means of their relative position in comparison to a focal point or locality (sub-group *I.a.iii.*). It is worth noting that the name-bearing localities referred to by the specific material are exclusively topographical names, such as fiords, water-courses and islands. These would probably have constituted major, well-known place-names at the time. Naming in relation to already named localities appears to have been slightly more relevant than naming in relation to unnamed ones since only four (approx. 4%) place-names signal this relationship (sub-group *I.a.ii.*). The sub-group relating to characterisation by means of relative position (*I.a.iii.*) is far better represented. Some 14% of all the names in this study belong here. The exact identification of the focal locality is for obvious reasons not discernible from the place-name material itself. However, it must be assumed that since reciprocation in Norwegian *bólstaðr*-names is unlikely (they never occur in pairs in Norway), the focal locality in question must be assumed to be the primary or original settlement in the area. At the same time this indicates that place-names belonging to this sub-group have been fitted into a previously named and thus structured settlement area. This means that the Norwegian *bólstaðr*-names of this sub-group may be taken to indicate the subordinate nature of the settlement.

Relationships of the locality other than the purely topographical ones are rare in the *bólstaðr*-place-name material in Norway. For instance, only one place-name (1%) indicates a relationship to a pagan institution (group *I.b.*), and only two (approx. 2%) indicate an associative relationship (group *I.c.*). It is remarkable that the ownership or other association of a *bólstaðr* locality to a person or a group of people has not been stated in more than approx. 2% of the instances. This must mean that the relevance of naming according to this fashion has been virtually absent. Why this is can only be surmised but it seems likely that the settlement-type *bólstaðr* denoted did not encourage this naming motive.

The category *II. Quality* is the most numerous one. There are no less than 53 place-names whose specific indicates a quality of sorts. 50 of these (55%) describe the size (group II.a.) of the locality. This is a remarkably high percentage for one single group, but it must be remembered that 47 of these are place-names of the \**Miklabólstaðr*-type. I have previously voiced my scepticism as to whether all of the examples of this type are genuine primary place-name formations, with the result that the size of this group may be artificially high. However, since it has not directly been possible to distinguish between any genuine and non-genuine primary place-name formations (see above and s.n. *Mebost*), I have chosen to list all examples, albeit with reservations.

Other forms of qualities of *bólstaðr* localities are rare. Only one place-name (approx. 1%) indicates the shape of the locality (group II.b.), one (approx. 1%) the age (group II.d.), and finally one (approx. 1%) describes what creatures are known or thought to exist at a locality (group II.f.i.).

Category *III. Usage* is fairly well represented in the Norwegian *bólstaðr* place-names. There are 12 Norwegian *bólstaðr* place-names (approx. 13%) which signal usage. They are all modified by ON *helgi*, the weak form of ON *heilagr*, adj., 'holy'. Why other types of usage have not been considered relevant as a motive for naming is intriguing. The main reason may well be that the usage has already been adequately expressed through the generic element. If this is so, the usage described through the specific-element material would necessarily have to describe a usage different from the norm.

The concept conveyed by 'holy' points to a religious utilisation of the locality, probably with a pagan Norse significance. I therefore assume that this usage is not typical of *bólstaðr* settlements, and indeed one would have to be hard pressed to see a religious significance in an element which is typically used to denote 'a farm'. To the namer, there would probably have been no doubts as to the denotation of ON *bólstaðr*.

### 7.3. The syntactic-semantic categorisation of the Scottish *bólstaðr* material

By far the greatest number of the place-names which originate, or probably originate, from ON *bólstaðr*, m., are found in the islands to the north and west of Scotland and in Caithness on the mainland. In these areas, there are no less than 240 place-names of this origin.<sup>145</sup> This is more than

145. Including the one example, *Bravost*, found in the Isle of Man.

twice the number found in Norway! This alone testifies to the popularity of this place-name element at the time of the Norse expansion into this area in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

There have been many local surveys and some general studies in which *bólstaðr* has featured to a greater or lesser extent. However, no single comprehensive study of this place-name element has ever been undertaken, which is why many of the surveys and studies have relied on under-researched and over-simplified material. The problem has mainly been source-related. This has meant that a number of place-name types of other origins have been mistaken for this place-name type. As an example, the Sutherland settlements *Embo*, *Skelbo* and *Skibo* have in various studies been interpreted as containing ON *bólstaðr*,<sup>146</sup> although the earliest source forms of each name (Ethenboll c. 1222 DKS (pp. 14-23, nr. 9), Scelbol, c. 1211 DKS (pp. 7-9, nr. 5), Scitheboll c. 1222 DKS (pp. 14-23, nr. 9)) clearly show forms in ON *ból*, n. 'a farm'. Compared with the Caithness names which contain ON *bólstaðr*, it is not conceivable that the final element *-stað-* would have been lost this early. Similarly, a number of other place-names in ON *ból*, n., 'a farm', ON *pollr*, m., 'a pool, a small rounded bay', and even Gaelic *poll*, m., 'a pit, a pond', have wrongly been interpreted as containing *bólstaðr*. All place-names interpreted at one stage or another as being a *bólstaðr*-name have been scrutinised in this work and all those which are not genuine place-names in ON *bólstaðr* have been excluded from the main body of material. They are, however, available for study in *Appendices*. Furthermore, a few place-names have turned out rather to be original names in ON *setr*, n., 'a shieling, a dwelling', or ON *stadir*, m. pl., 'a farm'. These have been assigned to the same sub-chapter.

There is a curious complementary spatial distribution of ON *ból*, n. and ON *bólstaðr*, which I feel there is a need to touch upon briefly. As I have stated above, place-names in ON *bólstaðr* are found in the Northern Isles, the Hebrides and in Caithness (and to some extent also in Sutherland) on the mainland. In contrast, the 30-40 place-names in ON *ból* are found primarily in the coastal stretches in Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Inverness-shire and Argyllshire on the Scottish mainland. Additionally, there is a small outcrop in the islands Mull, Coll and Tiree. These islands (together with Sutherland, if one accepts the two *bólstaðr* examples there as

146. Cf. e.g. the index of 'Bolstaðr Place-Names in Scotland' in *Britain before the Norman Conquest*, published by the Ordnance Survey (1973), pp. 61-3, where the alleged *bólstaðr*-names in a fair number of cases are of other origins.

being primary formations) are the only ones in which there is any overlapping of ON *bólstaðr* and ON *ból*.

It has not been possible on the basis of this material to establish with any degree of certainty why these two place-name types seem to complement each other in Scotland. There may be several reasons for the complementary distribution of ON *bólstaðr* and ON *ból*. It has been suggested that the distribution pattern reflects different chronological strata, possibly a fresh intake of settlers.<sup>147</sup> The distribution of ON *bólstaðr* would then represent the older layer of settlement and ON *ból* the younger one. It is known from the sagas that the colonies on the mainland of Scotland were established at a later date than the conquest of the Northern and Western Isles. In the late ninth century Earl Sigurd Ríki of Orkney and Thorstein the Red conquered Caithness and Sutherland (to the River Oyckell), and in the following century the Orkney Earldom spread further southward into Ross, Moray, Sutherland and the Dales. Superficially, this temporal difference in expansion could be seen as being great enough to spur the application of ON *ból* rather than ON *bólstaðr*. However, since only a maximum of one hundred years separate either expansion, this supposition cannot really be considered valid. Within this time span ON *bólstaðr* did not go out of fashion. This is e.g. evidenced in the numerous examples of place-names in ON *bólstaðr* in Caithness.

It is also implausible that the settlement situation should be so different as to prompt a difference in naming. The geography on the Scottish East Coast from the Ord of Caithness to the River Oykel is little different from that found in Caithness. Similarly, the geography on the North and West Coast from Strathy Head to the Mull of Kintyre is little different from the Hebrides. Since both Caithness and the Hebrides abound with place-names in ON *bólstaðr*, there is nothing in the geography which would directly speak against the presence of place-names in *bólstaðr* in the above mentioned coastal stretches. The absence of this place-name element from these areas must be explained differently.

I suspect that the explanation for the complementary distribution of ON *bólstaðr* and ON *ból* may be more complex than hitherto imagined. The present settlement structures in which settlements with names in ON *ból* occur bear witness to the complex ethnic and linguistic heritage of Scotland. There is a heavy Gaelic component in the nomenclature and to

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147. Cox, Richard, 'Descendants of Norse *bólstaðr*?: A Re-Examination of the Lineage of Bost & Co.', in Baldwin, John R. (ed.), *Peoples & Settlement in North-West Ross*, (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 57.

a lesser extent Pictish and Scandinavian elements. Additionally, there are also some later Scots place-names. Within this complex nomenclature, settlements with place-names in ON *ból* are decidedly secondary. Primary settlements usually have names of Pictish or Gaelic origin (although there are also a few primary settlements with place-names of a clearly Scandinavian origin). Other secondary settlements bear names primarily of Gaelic origin, with fewer of Scandinavian origin. Names of peripheral settlements are typically Gaelic in origin. Place-names of later Scots origin are normally either secondary or peripheral. This implies that the place-name element *ból* was largely applied to settlements being established within an already existing Pictish-Gaelic settlement structure. The heavily mixed settlement structure taken into consideration, it seems plausible that the Scandinavian settlers were never in the majority. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the Scandinavian population early on fused with the existing culture, thereby cutting short the full flowering of a Norse nomenclature. A similar situation is evident in Man, where there are several indications that the Scandinavian settlers early on mixed with the local Gaelic population.<sup>148</sup> The settlements bearing names in ON *ból* appear, judging from present-day conditions, to have been large farming settlements – probably with a focus on cultivation. This is in direct contrast with the application of ON *ból* in e.g. Iceland, where most of the settlements with names in *ból* are small units.<sup>149</sup> It is only settlements with names originating from the compound appellative *kirkjuból* which may be of a size approaching that of ON *ból* in Scotland. It is interesting that the application of ON *ból* on the mainland of Scotland appears to be different from other places in which this place-name element occurs. There is no straightforward answer to this, but it is possible that the unique situation in the areas in which place-names in *ból* are found, both linguistically and settlementwise, has caused the denotation to shift. Until a detailed separate study has been undertaken of this specific problem, however, the question of the spatial complementation of ON *bólstaðr* and ON *ból* must remain unanswered.

148. Cf. e.g. Fellows Jensen, Gillian, 'Scandinavian Settlement in the Isle of Man and Northwest England: the Place-Name Evidence', in Fell, C., Foote, P., Graham-Campbell, J. & Thomson, R. (eds), *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man. Select Papers from the 9th Viking Congress, Isle of Man, 4-14 July 1981*, (London, 1983), p. 43.

149. Sigmundsson, Svavar, '-ból', in *NONELex*, (Uppsala, 1993), 2 pp.

It has been a part of the aim of this book to gather as much source-material relating to ON *bólstaðr* as was possible and necessary for undertaking a thorough study. I have chosen to include all the forms it has been possible for me to assign to the individual place-names with a fair degree of certainty. Most of these are reliable but some are obvious misspellings or misrepresentations. The latter type has been included for the sake of completeness of the material. Needless to say, misspelt and misrepresented forms have not been considered in the interpretative phase. I have mainly concentrated on published source-material, as it would have been too time-consuming to check all the numerous unpublished rentals, cadastres, censuses and registers which exist for Scotland. The full list of sources examined can be viewed in *Source-abbreviations*. It will suffice here to mention only the major works and those which deserve special attention. The four major sources are: *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (OPS), *Register of the Great Seal* (RMS), *Register of the Privy Seal* (RSS), and *Retours*. These contain documents pertaining to the entire Scottish area, and are generally considered to be reliable sources, although there are a fair number of misrepresentations, which means that one has to be extra careful to obtain forms from alternative sources, if possible. I have checked a number of peculiar forms from these sources against the original documents, and they have all corresponded to the ones in the original so, generally speaking, the works OPS, RMS, RSS and *Retours* must be considered fairly reliable. Of local sources, I have partly checked such printed sources as I have found, such as *Records of the Earldom of Orkney, 1299-1614* (REO), *Register of Testaments in Shetland 1611-1650* (RegTes), *Orkney Testaments and Inventories 1573-1615* (OrkTes), etc., and partly also local works on place-names, such as Hugh Marwick's *Orkney Farm-Names*, (Kirkwall, 1952), and Doreen Waugh's *The place-names of six parishes in Caithness, Scotland* (unpublished Ph.D.-thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1985), etc., as such works generally provide a fine overview of the sources available for a specific area. The most readily available printed as well as unprinted sources have been checked by me against the forms in these works to assess the reliability of source-forms from these works. *Orkney Farm-Names*, for instance, contains few actual references to sources. The work itself, however, expressly states that the sources used are local unprinted rentals dating from 1500-1739 and 1794. I have chosen to include these in the material under the source-code of OR, since the author, Hugh Marwick, is normally very reliable.

Only a few early documents survive from the areas where *bólstaðr* is found in Scotland. Sources prior to 1500 are the exception rather than the



rule. This means that there may have been 500 years or more between coinage and recording. This means that place-names are often difficult to interpret, occasionally even impossible. The doubtful group of names are indicated with a question mark in the analysis below, whereas the 29 names that have proved impossible to interpret are naturally not present in the analysis.<sup>151</sup> In the cases where the interpretation is marked by uncertainty, either as the result of there being several possible interpretations or because of the poor and late documentation of the names, I have marked the specifics with a question mark in the syntactic-semantic analysis. It is unfortunate that the Scottish *bólstaðr* place-names are only relatively lately attested, as this naturally increases the uncertainty of interpretation, albeit not to such an extent that it has to be abandoned. The works I have used to define the interpretable place-name elements are Johan Fritzner's *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, and the *ONP*, to the extent it has been published.<sup>152</sup> These are generally accepted as being the most authoritative ON dictionaries.

The modern reflexes of *bólstaðr* vary greatly from region to region in the Scottish Isles. An in-depth study of the phonetic development from ON *bólstaðr* to its modern appearances is found in Ch. 4.2. However, a slight recapitulation is in order. The reflex-types most akin to the modern Norwegian representation in *Bolstad*, and *-bost(ad)* or *-bust* are *Bosta*, *Bousd* and *-bost*, which are prevalent in the Outer Hebrides, Skye, Coll, Tiree and Mull. A series of phonetic developments peculiar to Islay have given rise to forms like *Bolsa(y)* and *-bus* and *-bolls*, etc. The number of syllables preceding *bólstaðr* in compounded place-names help to explain these rather different forms. If *bólstaðr* is preceded by only one syllable, the modern reflex is *-bolls*, whereas the modern form is *-bus* if preceded by two syllables or more. In the Northern Isles (Shetland and Orkney), the normal modern reflexes are *Bousta* and possibly *Busta* in the simplex, and

151. The 29 place-name which I have not been able to interpret on the basis of the existing material are: *Alabost*, *Bilbster*, *Bylbster*, *\*Chalisbost*, *Clawbost*, *Ellibister*, *Flebister*, *Guidebest*, *\*Heillibost*, *Hindebollis*, *\*Hunabost*, *Inbuster*, *\*Keepster*, *Kepolls*, *Labost*, *Leodebest*, *Leurbost*, *Lewbambster*, *Loedebest*, *\*Meabost*, *Misbister*, *Shebster*, *Skeabost*, *Skidgibist*, *\*Skorribest*, *Tister*, *Titulbuster*, *Tuskerbister* and *\*Unabust*.

152. Fritzner, Johan, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, (Kristiania, 1886-96), *Rettelser og tillæg*, (Oslo, 1972); *ONP*: Degnbol, H., Jacobsen, B. C., Rode, E., Sanders, C. & Helgadóttir, P. (eds), *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog = A dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, (Copenhagen: The Arnamagnæan Commission, 1989-), vol. 1-.



*-bister* and even *-bist* in parts of Orkney. A development of the Northern Isles type is found in Caithness as *-bster*, *-mster* (under the influence of a preceding nasal), or even as *-ster*.

During the collection of the source-material, I became suspicious of a few of the place-names in Shetland, Orkney and Caithness. In some late sources, place-names started cropping up which formally looked authentic enough with typical *bólstaðr*-reflexes. The ensuing interpretation showed that the specific material normally seemed to be late, either late local place-names, such as the Caithness place-name *Achavar* of Gaelic origin in *Achawabuster*, or words from the local modern lexicons. Furthermore, their general topographical location was without question inferior to that of the normal genuine *bólstaðr*-locality (cp. e.g. *Appendix 1.2* with the study of the genuine *bólstaðr* settlements in Ch. 6.3.). There seemed little doubt that these were late formations, an assumption which was confirmed by a letter of 1627 which related to the establishment of the Shetland settlement of *Lunabister*, which had hitherto generally been regarded as a genuine place-name in *bólstaðr*:

[...] the litle toun and quoy callit *Lunabister* pertaining [...] to the said James Neven as ane pendicle of his heretabill udallandis of Scousbruch, and quhilk wes first labourit and manureit be umquhill Adame Neven of Scouisbrucht his grandschir [...] lyand besouth the dykis thairof, above the loch in the outfreddome and pasture of the said land.<sup>153</sup>

The Adam Neven mentioned in the text died around 1560, which means that the settlement of *Lunabister* must have come into existence slightly earlier than this date, possibly a decade or two earlier. It cannot but be assumed that the coinage of the name took place at the same time, as the specific is most probably Shetl. *lon*, sb., ‘a piece of home-pasture, close to the farm’ (Jakobsen 1928, pp. 521-2). The prospect of a coinage of place-names in *-bister* as late as the 16<sup>th</sup> century was intriguing. Was *bólstaðr* really productive as late as this in Shetland? In *An etymological dictionary of the Norn language*, Jakob Jakobsen notes the following:

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153. Scottish Record Office, RS.44/2 folios 107 verso – 108 recto.

\***bister**, sb., [...] a) *dwelling; farm*; b) *collection of farms*. Now quite obs[olete] as common noun, but it appears in a great many number of names for farms and villages, so that the meaning of the word is still understood ...<sup>154</sup>

Whether or not Jakobsen considered that *bister* had actually been a living appellative in its own right is not entirely evident. What is clear, however, is that the element is understood to mean what it means on the basis of its appearance as the second part of a compound place-name. The element has thus probably not survived from ON but has been perceived to be a settlement designation solely from its appearance in place-names. That this element in itself is perceived to be a settlement designation, seems to me to be the probable reason behind this late coinage of place-names which usually refer to no more than mere houses. It may thus not have been in use as an appellative as such but has probably been used as a generic element with these late names on analogy with preexisting farm-names in *-bister*. This type of analogy is quite well-known from other types of generics such as e.g. Sw *hult*.<sup>155</sup> The Swedish scholar Bengt Pamp has called this type of phenomenon 'Analogical affix name-formation'.<sup>156</sup> Although the element *-bister* in these analogical affix name-formations originated from the occurrence of *bólstaðr* in the names on which these later names are formed, *bister* does *not* function in the same way as *bólstaðr* does. The etymological umbilical cord to ON *bólstaðr* has been severed, as the naming in *bister* is solely guided by associations of some sort with settlement names in *-bister*, as is evident from the fact that some of these analogical formations refer to rocky faces or mounds (most likely because of the resemblance of these features to building-structures). These later names do not, therefore, belong with the genuine formations in ON *bólstaðr*, m., and I have therefore placed them in **Appendix 1**, as a group for closer scrutiny. This group comprises place-names which can be dated, either linguistically or non-linguistically, as being, or most likely being, late analogical affix name-formations.

Of the total number of 240 place-names, the ensuing syntactic-seman-

154. Jakobsen, Jakob, *An etymological dictionary of the Norn language*, (Copenhagen, 1928), p. 44.

155. Cf. Benson, Sven, 'Namngivning och namntypologi', in *SOÅ 1972*, (Lund, 1972), pp. 34-40.

156. Pamp, Bengt, 'Onomastisk Analogi', in Albøge, G. *et al.* (eds), *Norna-Rapporter 45. Analogi i navngivning*, p. 159.

tic analysis will contain only 201, owing to the fact that 10 are simplex formations, and hence not eligible for this specific type of analysis, and a further 29 have not been interpretable. Because of the large number of names in this analysis, only one group in the syntactic-semantic model, *I.d. An external event to which naming is related*, has not been exemplified in the material, and will, therefore, not be referred to in the discussion below.

## Syntactic-semantic analysis of the Scottish bólstaðr-place-name material

### I. RELATIONSHIP

#### a. Topographical relationship

##### i. Characterisation of the location in relation to a name-bearing location.

There are seven place-names in the Scottish material which signal, or probably signal, the situation of the locality as compared with a named locality. These can either be hills, as in: ON \**Keipr*, m., and ON \**Varða*, f.; watercourses as in: ON ?\**Renna*, f., ON \**Slenta*, f., and ON \**Sopandi*, m.; or possibly even fiords: ON ?\**Qngi*, m. (2). In Norway, such named localities are often found as the specific of other place-names in the vicinity. It has not been possible to find any references to current names in connection with the Scottish material. In a couple of instances, however, the named feature can be identified. For instance, the Shetland hill-name \**Keipr* was later known as *Da Kebb* before it took the name *Luggie's Knowe* after a sorcerer who lived near it. The ON hill-name of \**Varða* in Orkney is now known as *Ward Hill*, a hill rising steeply behind the site where the settlement of *Warbister* once stood.

##### ii. Characterisation of the location in relation to a non-name-bearing location.

This is the best represented sub-group in the Scottish material, as there are no less than 49 place-names which are described by their situation in relation to an unnamed location. The locality referred to is only very occasionally a man-made feature, as is the case with: ON *brú*, f., 'a bridge' (2). In by far the majority of instances, the localities are natural features: ON *á*, f., 'a stream' (2), ON ?*áll*, m., 'a deep valley' (2), ON *ár*, gen. sg. of *á*, f., 'a stream' (2), ON *áss*, m., 'a hill-crest, a mountain-ridge', ON ?*bingr*, m., 'a division (in a house)', or 'the designation of a locality of a special character, possibly a bend of a stream, or a small settlement limited in size by nature', ON ?*eið*, n., 'an isthmus, a neck of land', ON *eyrr*, f., 'a bank of sand or gravel protruding out into water, especially at the mouth of a river', ON *grandi*, m., 'a sand bank in or under water', ON *hals*, m., 'a neck' or 'a ridge of land which divides two valleys or firths',

ON *hlíð*, n., 'a slope' (4), ON *kambr*, m., 'a ridge, a hill-crest' (2), ON *kinn*, f., 'a cheek', or here probably 'a steep hill-side or mountain-side' (2), ON *kjarr*, n., 'brushwood, fen or marsh' (3), ON *kollr*, m., 'a rounded (hill) top' (2), ON *kúla*, f., 'an elevation, whatever rises out of or from an otherwise level surface' (3), ON *melr*, m., 'a sand bank, a gravel bank' (2), ON *?mosi*, m., 'a bog, marsh, moor', ON *mýrr*, f., 'a moor, a bog', ON *nes*, n., 'a promontory' (2), ON *óss*, m., 'a mouth of a river or stream', ON *ró*, f., 'a nook, corner', ON *sjár*, m., 'water', here 'a lake', ON *sær*, m., 'water', here 'a lake', ON *vatn*, n., 'water', here 'a lake' (4), ON *vaz*, gen. sg. of *vatn*, n., 'water, a lake' (5).

iii. *Characterisation of the location by means of its relative position.* There are 33 place-names in the Scottish material whose situation is marked out in terms of a situation relative to a focal locality. The relative position may be marked by compass point: ON *austr*, adv., 'east', ON *eystri*, comp. adj., 'more easterly' (7), ON *norðr*, adv., 'north', ON *suðr*, adv., 'south' (2), ON *synstr*, sup. adj., 'southernmost' (3), ON *vestr*, adv., 'west' (2), ON *vestri*, comp. adj., 'more westerly'; or strictly by relative location: ON *efri*, comp. adj., 'upper' (5), ON *hár*, adj., 'high' (2), ON *hærri*, comp. adj., 'higher' (2), ON *miðr*, adj., 'in the middle' (2), ON *nærri*, comp. adj., 'closer', ON *undir*, adv., 'under, below', ON *ytri*, comp. adj., 'outer' (3).

#### **b. Institutional and administrative relationship**

There are only two different specific elements in this material in this group, namely: ON *garðr*, m., 'a fence, an enclosure, a farm-yard, a farm' (3), ON *kirkja*, f., 'a church' (20). However, as is indicated by the bracketed figures, they are found in no less than 23 examples of the entire material. It might be argued that in some instances the relationship is not institutional or administrative, but possibly topographical (sub-group I.a.ii.) or possibly not even to be seen in relative terms, but more as a quality of the locality (sub-group II.f.iii.). Unfortunately, such fine distinctions of reference within the same specific are not possible, and although the above-mentioned possibilities offer themselves, I have found no other alternative than to list them all under this heading.

#### **c. Associative relationship**

This group consists of seven place-names, six of which seemingly reveal their associative relationship by having a personal name as the specific: ON *Áni*, m., ON *?Fróði*, m., ON *Hákon*, m., ON *Heðinn*, m., ON *Skeggi*,

m., ON ?*Sveinn*, m.; and one by having as specific an appellative which states the occupation of a person: Gaelic *pearsa*, f., 'a parson'. These personal names and the occupational term probably show the ownership of the locality. This group is not very numerous, only marginally larger than the Norwegian equivalent.

## II. QUALITY

### a. Size

Compared with its Norwegian counterpart, this group is severely underrepresented. There is only one example of a place-name in the Scottish material in which the specific appears to describe the size of a locality: ON ?*stórr*, adj., 'large, great'. As will become clear, the interpretation of this specific is not entirely unproblematic, and this fact must be taken into consideration.

### b. Shape

The general shape of a locality is often indicated by the specific in the Scottish material. There are 13 examples of such a quality being pointed out: ON *brattr*, adj., 'steep' (2), ON *breiðr*, adj., 'wide, broad' (10), ON *flatr*, adj., 'flat'.

### c. Colour

Six examples indicate the colour of a locality. What exact part of the locality has the colour indicated is not known. The reference may be to the vegetation, natural features like rocks and boulders, or watercourses, etc. The specified colour is in most cases no longer evident in the topography: ON *grár*, adj., 'grey' (4), ON *grænn*, adj., 'green', ON *myrkr*, adj., 'dark'.

### d. Age

In the three instances in which the age of the locality is mentioned, the reference is always ON *nýr*, adj., 'new'. That no more *bólstaðr* localities, which are typically settlements, have been specified by their age may seem puzzling. However, as it must be assumed that many of the settlements were established at the same time, the adjective 'new' would not distinguish them from each other. In other words, naming according to this motive was not found to be terribly appropriate.

### e. Material and texture

The material or texture of the locality or its land seems only to have had a very limited relevance as a naming motive. According to the few examples, the focus of this motive is on the land of the locality. Of the four

examples, only one relates to the temporary state or condition of the land, ON *brandr*, m., 'a fire, burning', here after having been cleared by fire. The remaining three examples relate to the type of soil: ON *grjót*, n., 'gravel', ON *leirr*, m., 'clay, mud' (2).

**f. That which exists at or by**

*i. Creatures.* There are 13 place-names in this material which document which creatures are to be found at the locality – real or imaginary, permanently or occasionally. In four of the examples, the creatures in question are domestic animals: ON *hross*, n., 'a horse', ON *hundr*, m., 'a dog', ON *kúa*, gen. pl. of *kyr*, f., 'a cow' (2); whereas the rest of the examples describe wild creatures: ON *?arna*, gen. pl. of *orn*, m., 'an eagle', ON *kráka*, f., 'a crow', ON *?skári*, m., 'a young sea-gull' (3), ON *?svana*, gen. pl. of *svanr*, m., 'a swan', ON *svanr*, m., 'a swan', ON *ulfr*, m., 'a wolf' (2). The permanency of the presence of the creatures referred to is not entirely determinable, although it must be assumed that the domestic animals involved would have been part of the farm-economy and therefore more permanently at the locality. The wild animals, on the other hand, may only have been seen once or even only be thought to have been present at the locality.

*ii. Plant-growth.* This sub-group is much less frequently exemplified in this material. Only seven place-names describe the types of plants at the locality. The majority of these, six in total, describe or probably describe wild plants: ON *hrís*, n., 'brushwood', ON *selja*, f., 'a willow' (2), ON *?þorn*, m., 'a thorn, a thorn-bush' (3); whereas only one place-name is defined by cultivated plants being grown there: ON *korn*, n., 'grain, corn'.

*iii. Inanimate objects.* The characterisation of a locality by the objects which are found there occurs in no less than 32 examples. The locality is mostly characterised by man-made objects: ON *akr*, m., 'a field', ON *haugr*, m., 'a mound' (4), ON *hús*, n., 'a house' (4), ON *høgr*, m., 'a stone-heap, a heap of gathered stones', ON *kross*, m., 'a cross, a junction' (3), ON *kylna*, f., 'a kiln', ON *?rúm*, n., 'a room, a partition', ON *skáli*, m., 'a hall, a long-house, a house, a hut' (4), ON *steinn*, m., 'a stone, a standing-stone' (7), ON *varða*, f., 'a ward, a pyramid-shaped or conical stone-heap erected to serve as a marker' (2), and only occasionally by natural features: ON *engi*, n., 'a meadow' (2), ON *hella*, f., 'a flat, stone or rock', ON *kelda*, f., 'a spring'. It may be argued that some of these examples rather describe a topographical relationship (sub-group I.a.ii.). However, the

general size of the objects described here is not great and this makes it highly questionable whether the locality, in the case of its being a *bólstaðr* settlement, can actually be characterised in relation to such features. It would seem more natural that these features simply described a quality by which the locality is best characterised.

### **g. Perceived qualities**

This more subjective naming motive has only had negligible relevance for the namers in this material. Only two place-names have been modified with a specific describing this type of quality of the locality: ON *full*, adj., 'stinking, rotten smelling', ON *kald*, adj., 'cold'.

## **III. USAGE**

It does not appear to have been necessary for the namer to state the usage of a locality, which suggests that the utilisation would have been obvious from the generic element itself. Only one example might reflect the usage of a locality: ON *pruma*, f., 'land, soil'. I am, nevertheless, not entirely certain that this example belongs here. One might argue that it would rather be at home in sub-group II.f.iii., as is ON *akr*, m., 'a field, a cultivated field'. There just seems to be a difference between what *pruma* and *akr* refer to. Where *akr* refers to a limited area of cultivation at the locality, *pruma* would seem to refer to the entire locality. Should this be the case, then the appellative describes a usage of the locality. This is how I have seen *pruma* and why I have placed it here.

The weakness of this analytic model is that some types of specific are difficult to place under one certain category, and some are even difficult to make to fit into this system at all! Such a one is *pruma*, and due consideration should be taken to its situation in this category.

Of the Scottish material, approx. 59% belong to the syntactic-semantic category *I. Relationship*, whereas approx. 40% of the total are found under category *II. Quality*, and the remaining name has been categorised under *III. Usage*. Compared with the Norwegian material (approx. 29%, 58%, and 13%, respectively), one immediately notices some considerable differences. First and foremost, category *III. Usage* is virtually absent from the Scottish material (0.5%), whereas it was represented in 13% of the Norwegian material. Furthermore, *I. Relationship* is by far the best represented Scottish category with approx. 59%, just under 30% higher than the equivalent Norwegian category at approx. 29%. Where category *II. Quality* was the largest in Norway with approx. 58%, it trails behind in the

Scottish material with some 40%. What are the reasons for this significant discrepancy between the focus in naming motives between Norway and Scotland? To me, there would seem to be two main reasons for this. Firstly, it must be borne in mind that some of the specifics describing a quality of the locality in Norway may represent instances of *imitative naming*, making this category disproportionately large. On the other hand, there is little firm evidence to support this assumption other than an over-representation of a single name-type, *\*Miklabólstaðr*. For instance, the topographical study has not been able to show any discrepancy between this name-type and all the other *bólstaðr*-constructions in Norway. Secondly, the difference in naming motives may reflect a different naming situation. It must be remembered that the settlement-structure in which *bólstaðr* was used in Norway was one which had had a long continuous development. Here *bólstaðr* was just another settlement-type which was fitted into the pre-existing structure. In Scotland, the Norse settlement-structure had been much less developed. The individual settlement units into which this place-name element was fitted had been established perhaps only a few decades earlier. Here, *bólstaðr* was a major settlement-type of great relevance and very fashionable. Such differences in settlement structure would lead to different motives being considered in the naming process.

As I mentioned earlier, approx. 59% of the Scottish material belongs to the syntactic-semantic category *I. Relationship*, spread over the following groups: *I.a. Topographical relationship* approx. 44%, *I.b. Institutional and administrative relationship* approx. 11%, and *I.c. Associative relationship* just under 4%. As is evident, about 75% of the examples in this category describe a topographical relationship. The relationship to another locality is rarely indicated by the name of the locality (sub-group *I.a.i.*). Only in just under 4% of the total number of instances does this occur. It is worth noting that the type of name-bearing locality referred to (i.e. a topographical feature) corresponds fully to the Norwegian material. The best represented topographical relationship is the one indicating a relationship to a non-named locality (sub-group *I.a.ii.*). The majority of references within this sub-group are to natural features, rather than man-made ones – again in full accordance with the types found in the Norwegian material. This relationship is found in no less than approx. 24% of the material in total. Specifics describing a relative position are also quite common (approx. 16% of the entire material). Of non-topographical relationships described by the specifics, the institutional and administrative relationship (group *I.b*) is of most frequent occurrence, having been used with approx. 11%



of the material. This is significantly higher than in Norway, where only about 1% of the specifics signalled this relationship. The importance of this relationship in Scotland as compared with Norway is closely connected with the rise of Christianity, as the majority of the specifics in this group relate to the institutional centres of Christianity, churches. This serves as a good indicator that different circumstances dictate different patterns of naming. As in Norway, the associative relationship of *bólstaðr* does not seem to have been overly important in the naming-process, as barely 4% of the total have been named according to this motive.

It is interesting to note that the naming motives in this category predominantly describe the situation of the locality. In other words, the naming motive is to place the locality on the 'mental map'. This naming motive must to a large extent have been carried over from Norway, where this type of naming is also well attested. That the motives guiding the formation of a name according to a topographical relationship in Scotland were brought over from Norway is proved by the fact that the types of named localities exemplified in the Scottish material are exactly parallel to the Norwegian equivalents. However, this category was more used in the Scandinavian colonies in Scotland than in Norway. The reason for this can only be surmised but if the general settlement structure was less firmly established, it would make sense to name more frequently according to distinctive topographical features. In this way the locality would be distinguishable, irrespective of the settlement structure in general. And since this type of naming was known to function well in the homeland, it would make perfect sense to utilise this naming motive to the full.

Category II. *Quality* is also well-represented in the Scottish material, being found in just over 40% of the total material. Where the size of a *bólstaðr* locality appears to have been the major quality expressed in the Norwegian material, the Scottish material relating to a quality of a locality is far more evenly distributed over all the sub-categories. In fact, the most poorly represented group in this category is II.a. *Size*. Under 1% of the material is found here. Instead the groups II.b. *Shape* and II.f. *That which exists at or by* are the best represented in this category with approx. 7% and approx. 26%, respectively. The remaining groups are of much more rare occurrence (II.c. *Colour* 3%, II.d. *Age* 2%, II.e. *Material and Texture* 2%, II.g. *Perceived qualities* 1%). Group II.f. *That which exists at or by* is interesting. From being almost non-existent in Norway, it features in a quarter of all the Scottish examples, of which over 6% describe creatures at the locality (II.f.i.), approx. 4% the vegetation (II.f.ii.), and approx. 16% inanimate objects (II.f.iii.).

That all aspects of this naming motive seem to have been utilised here, is in clear contrast to the naming situation for *bólstaðr* in Norway. It therefore follows that this development is significant in some way. The question is just what kind of significance? The Norwegian examples relating to this category mostly describe the size of a settlement. The size of a settlement is only relevant if there is something with which to compare it. Presuming that the Norwegian names were bestowed on factual grounds, the size of the locality appears to have been relevant only within the existing settlement-structure, as the Norwegian *bólstaðr* place-names do not reciprocate with each other. Therefore, it seems that naming according to size in Norway in the case of this place-name-type presupposes an already fully established structure. The fuller exploitation of this category in Scotland may indicate a less firmly established structure so that other motives of naming have to be utilised to create a relevant place-name. It is, for instance, interesting to see that group *II.f. That which exists at or by* flourished in *Scotia Scandinavica* – a quarter of all *bólstaðr* place-names are found to exemplify this group! The focus of relevance has clearly shifted from a limited utilisation of this category in Norway to become a most potent naming motive in the Scottish material. However, this shift in focus may also be the result of other factors, not immediately evident from the material.

The final category, *III. Usage*, is only very sparsely represented, and the single representative of this category is itself somewhat doubtful (see above).

The Scottish material shows both a continuation of the naming motives used with the Norwegian material, and an independent development. The continuation is especially evident with category *I. Relationship* where all the same naming motives are used in both areas, and also partly in the same way. Category *II. Quality* shows very well how some of the naming motives developed and changed with the new environment. On the other hand, the almost complete neglect of category *III. Usage* shows that there seems to have been little doubt as to what a *bólstaðr* actually was.

This material does not, however, have an overrepresentation of one name-type such as that of *\*Miklabólstaðr* in Norway. Instead, there seem to have been tendencies to develop name-types locally in various areas. For instance, of the seven place-names which feature ON *steinn*, m., 'a stone, a standing-stone', five are found in Caithness alone. A peculiar difference between Shetland and Orkney exists whereby *bólstaðr* place-names compounded with ON *vatn*, n., 'water, a lake, etc.' were not compounded in the same way. In Shetland the specific was compounded in its stem-form (> *Wadbister*), whereas it was compounded in the genitive singular form in Orkney (> *Wasbister*). On a larger scale, the words: ON

*breiðr*, adj., 'broad, wide' and ON *kirkja*, f., 'a church' may represent the timid beginnings of the process which resulted in the great overrepresentation of \**Miklabólstaðr* in Norway.

As I see it, certain name-types may go from being relevant in an ordinary sense, i.e. the presence of a standing-stone (ON *steinn*, m.) on a *bólstaðr* locality spurs a naming in which both elements occur. A compound \**Steinbólstaðr* may then gain currency as an appropriate naming entity when both conditions for naming are present. In other words, the acceptability of this compound excludes all other possibilities of a name in *bólstaðr* – the compound has become super-relevant and future naming thus *imitative*. The next step is to transfer the entity \**Steinbólstaðr* to a locality without any regard for factual conditions. In other words naming has become *associative*. No certain examples of this latter type of analogy are known from the Scottish *bólstaðr* material.

It can be very hard to distinguish between the various developments described above. There will be no traceable difference between the two first types, as the name-formation takes place on factual grounds. It is only when naming becomes *associative* that the denotation may start to slide and differences can be detected. Since the topographical study has not been able to detect any differences in application of the Norwegian \**Miklabólstaðr*-type, it does not appear to be likely that the overrepresentation of this name-type should be the result of *associative naming*, as this type of analogy ought to have yielded a greater difference in topographical application than the topographical survey has shown. On the other hand, it can be very difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between a genuine place-name formation and an *imitative* place-name formation on topographical grounds.

The 47 Norwegian examples of the \**Miklabólstaðr*-type are probably partly genuine formations and partly *imitative* formations. This helps to explain why the place-names of this type are not different in topographical application from other *bólstaðr* place-names in Norway. Similarly, some timid traces of super-relevance seems to have come into force locally in Scotia Scandinavica, as local patterns of special name-types are found only in very limited areas. As is the case in Norway, there is nothing in the topographical survey to suggest that their denotation was any different from that of genuine place-name formations. This is why I have included them in the general syntactic-semantic analysis.

There is very little proof in the Scottish material of direct analogy by *associative naming*. The only possible instances are *Scrabster* and *Ulbster* in Sutherland. These may be transferred names from the equivalent

*Scrabster* and *Ulbster* in Caithness. There is, however, no firm evidence that they are analogical formations, hence they have not been omitted from the syntactic-semantic analysis, but have been included with reservations.

All in all, it must be said that the Scottish *bólstaðr*-material is a complex group to interpret and analyse. Owing to the sparseness of detailed early documentary evidence for the areas in which Scandinavian settlement took place, it is difficult to be absolutely certain what happened in naming and what did not. I have attempted to create as nuanced a picture of the onomastic situation of this place-name type in Scotland as possible. The material at my disposal has not usually permitted firm interpretations, which is why so many ifs and buts are attached here. What is certain, however, is that *bólstaðr* was an extremely popular and important place-name element with great relevance for the settlers in the Scottish colonies.

The interpretations I have made of this place-name material should not be seen as ultimate. Different interpretations and different ways of systematising and categorising the material may yield different results from those reached here.

#### 7.4. The Icelandic and Faroese *bólstaðr* material and its systematisation

I have not found it necessary to attempt a categorisation of the Faroese material, as the size of the material (three possible examples) does not allow for a systematisation of any scientific relevance. The remainder of this sub-chapter will therefore concentrate on the Icelandic *bólstaðr* corpus.

The Icelandic material contains 18 certain *bólstaðr* place-names and a further two possible examples. 16 of these are compound place-names, and four are simplex place-names. The two uncertain place-names, *Hqrðaból*, and *Kirkjuból*, are first mentioned as *á Hqrðabólstað* (c. 1330-1370 Laxd, Ch. 6) and *á Kirkjubólstað* (c. 1700 LdnSk, p. 17), respectively. However, all later references cite these place-names as ending in *-ból*, and this element is also reflected in their modern form. These place-names may either be genuine *bólstaðr* place-names which have subsequently had their final element reduced, or their earliest forms may be scribal substitutions of *bólstaðr* for *ból*. I have chosen to include these as possible genuine *bólstaðr*-place-names solely on the grounds of their earliest forms, but with reservations.

The remaining 14 compound formations are, strangely, all originally etymologically identical, *Breiðabólstaður* (although two of these have later undergone a change of name to *Staður*). The fact that virtually all *bólstaðr* compounds in Iceland are of the same origin shows very eloquently how prone this place-name element was to generate place-names not only in certain general categories but also to a large extent imitative formations. There is a great difference between creating a place-name by actively compounding a relevant specific with a generic and coining a place-name on the model of a known entity. The Icelandic place-names of the *Breiðabólstaður*-type must to a large extent have been coined with known place-names of identical structure in mind. This known place-name may possibly be from Scotland, as the Icelandic place-name scholar Svavar Sigmundsson has suggested.<sup>157</sup> Since ten place-names of the same type are found in the Scotia Scandinavica area, and none are known from Norway, it is tempting to see this name-type in Iceland as imported from the Scottish Isles by some of those settlers who, the *Landnámabók* informs us, came from there.

That analogy has probably played a great part in the over-frequency of occurrence of this name-type in Iceland has long been assumed. For instance, Svavar Sigmundsson has long considered this to be the case but he believes that although the *Breiðabólstaður* place-names are probably analogical formations, they were probably bestowed in an objective fashion. He sees the problem as lying in the fact that the choice guiding what words to use as constituents in place-names is not free. Instead, a number of terms become favoured and these then form certain patterns of naming.<sup>158</sup> These patterns may then prompt naming wholly by association. Since associative naming does not take the original denotation into consideration, it should be possible to detect differences in the type of locality the place-names refer to. The problem is, however, that analogy in naming may very well operate on a factual basis. If this is the case, analogy acts so 'discreetly', to use the Swedish scholar Bengt Pamp's terminology, that it is very hard to detect indeed.<sup>159</sup> Although I have not studied the

157. Sigmundsson, Svavar, 'Icelandic and Scottish place-names', in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, August 4-11, 1996*, (Aberdeen, 1998), vol. II, pp. 330-42.

158. Sigmundsson, Svavar, 'Analogi i islandske stednavne', in Albøge, G. et al. (eds), *Norna-rapporter 45. Analogi i navngivning*, (Uppsala, 1991), p. 193.

159. Pamp, Bengt, 'Onomastisk Analogi', in Albøge, G. et al. (eds), *Norna-rapporter 45. Analogi i navngivning*, (Uppsala, 1991), p. 172.

Icelandic *bólstaðr* localities in much detail, there does not seem to be any major difference in the type of locality an Icelandic *bólstaðr* may refer to from what is the case with a Norwegian or a Scottish one. The associations guiding the bestowing of *bólstaðr* place-names in Iceland appear only to have gone so far as to imitate the structure of a known place-name and the imitation of this known structure is on the whole rooted in a factual basis. Since it is hard to detect that a naming on analogy has taken place with this name-type with the aid of extra-onomastic evidence, I have chosen to list these names under genuine names but with substantial reservations. Because there are in reality only three different types of first elements in *bólstaðr* compounds in Iceland (*breiðr*, adj., 'broad, wide', *hgrðar*, m. pl., 'people from Hordaland', *kirkja*, f., 'a church'), I have chosen not to undertake a syntactic-semantic study of this scanty place-name material. That there are doubts whether the compounded place-names are genuine *bólstaðr* formations has also been a determining factor.

The Icelandic *bólstaðr* material is on the whole uncomplicated, and the linguistic interpretations have rarely been difficult. As with the Norwegian and the Scottish material, I have used Johan Fritzner's *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, and the *ONP*, to define the interpretable place-name elements.<sup>160</sup> The source material is among the best in this material, owing to the long tradition of writing in Iceland. *Bólstaðr* place-names are mentioned from the very earliest sources, the numerous sagas (e.g. *Eb*, *Eir*, *Kristni*, *Laxd*, & *Stu*, etc.) and the *Landnámabók*, and are well-represented later in local cadastres (*Jardabækkr*) and on maps of Iceland (*IK*). In fact, *bólstaðr* place-names are mentioned so frequently that I have chosen only to list a fair representation of the source-forms for each individual place-name.

It is to some extent surprising that analogy should play such an active role with the Icelandic *bólstaðr* material, as *imitative naming* only seems to have played a minor role with place-names in *bólstaðr* in the Scandinavian colonies in Scotland, especially considering the date of coinage in Iceland. The initial settlement phase is generally accepted to date from the late 9<sup>th</sup> century to the early 10<sup>th</sup> century (some authorities say c. 870-930). Since this place-name type typically refers to secondary settlements, the most likely earliest date of coinage would be the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. This

160. Fritzner, Johan, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, (Kristiania, 1886-96), *Rettelser og tillæg*, (Oslo, 1972); *ONP*: Degnbol, H., Jacobsen, B. C., Rode, E., Sanders, C. & Helgadóttir, P. (eds), *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* = *A dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, (Copenhagen: The Arnamagnæan Commission, 1989-), vol. 1-.

is very close to the time at which Caithness and Sutherland were settled by Scandinavians. The naming situation in Iceland is vastly different from that in e.g. Caithness, where a great variety of specifics is used to modify place-names in *bólstaðr*. Although some amount of *imitative naming* may also be found there, it is as nothing compared to the scale of such naming in Iceland. What are the reasons for this?

It could be argued that the settlement-structure may have been too different from that of the Norse colonies in Scotland so that the particular settlement generic *bólstaðr* was not seen to be terribly appropriate, as in e.g. the Faroe Islands (see below). However, since there is some proof that a splitting up did take place of the original large estates into large secondary farms or even small estates,<sup>161</sup> this alternative does not seem very likely, as one would expect *bólstaðr* to be a suitable place-name element for this type of settlement. The conditions for the use of this place-name generic certainly seem to have been present.

Alternatively, the general geography of Iceland may hold the key to the restricted onomastic use of *bólstaðr*. As explained in Ch. 5.1., the majority of the farming-land is found in the fiord and river regions, where the morainic layer is deep enough to sustain farming. And indeed this is where the *bólstaðrs* are found. Where the layout of a settlement followed the general direction of the moraine bands, it would naturally appear to be 'wide', rather than 'long', especially from the point of view of the fiord or river. Therefore, with the geography to some extent being able to dictate a typical shape for the lands of a settlement, the name-type *Breiðabólstaðr* would be a natural choice, as it would describe both the type of locality and its shape. However, with the topography being as it is, one would have expected even more place-names in *Breiðabólstaðr* than is the case, so this explanation is not very likely either.

Instead, I feel an explanation for the restricted use of *bólstaðr* in Iceland must be sought for in the onomastic properties it carried there. There can be little doubt that many of the names in *Breiðabólstaðr* must be analogical formations. As I have explained earlier, when a place-name is formed on analogy with another place-name, the original denotation carried by the model place-name is not necessarily carried over to the new formation. In other words, the denotation starts to slide. When a place-name type forms as one-sided a pattern on which to generate names as *bólstaðr* did in Ice-

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161. Cf. e.g. Vésteinsson, Orri, 'Patterns of settlement in Iceland: a study in prehistory', in *Saga Book*, vol. xxv, part 1, (London, 1998), pp. 1-29.

land, the generative effect causes analogical formations to be based on already analogically formed place-names, with the result that the denotation of *bólstaðr* would not only slide but move into free-fall. How the denotation moved is not entirely certain, but since the application of this place-name type appears to have been fairly specialised (cf. Ch. 6., above), it is probable that the denotation moved in the more general direction of 'a farm', which is the recorded appellative connotation of *bólstaðr*. However, there is no direct evidence to support the proposition that the denotation ever shifted so far in the direction of as general a term as the known connotation. The shift in denotation may well have caused *bólstaðr* to be perceived as not being very relevant as a settlement generic. The denotation 'farm' is equally well described by other habitative generics. This fluctuation in denotation through analogy, combined with a short effective span of application to settlement locations owing to the rapid settlement of Iceland,<sup>162</sup> are to me the main reasons for the limited application of *bólstaðr* in Iceland, both onomastically as well as in terms of sheer numbers.

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162. The fact that nine of the *bólstaðr* settlements are home to church sites, strongly indicates that they were established before 1000 at the latest. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-3.



## 8. The East Scandinavian dissemination

A cognate of *bólstaðr* also exists in the closely related East Scandinavian language, namely Old Swedish (OSw) *bolstaper*, m. It is found mainly in Swedish and occurs both as an appellative as well as a place-name element. The distribution of this element is much more limited. It is found mostly in east central Sweden and in the south-western parts of Finland, in the areas where Swedish influence was most significant.<sup>163</sup> The usage of OSw *bolstaper* is rather different from that of *bólstaðr* in a number of aspects and not directly related. However, the East Scandinavian place-name corpus and the formal material relating to this place-name type has been included mainly to achieve a comprehensive collection. Therefore, the focus of attention on this material is minimal.

Being a cognate of *bólstaðr*, OSw *bolstaper* is a compound of OSw *bol*, n., and OSw *staper*, m., each carrying a wide range of meanings. The first element of the compound, *bol*, could be used appellatively of either 'a (landed) farm', 'a newly developed settlement, a settlement or farm established on a common or outfield', or 'a farm, landed farm of a certain size or value'.<sup>164</sup> The core connotation is that of 'a farm and its land', and as such, the range of meanings of OSw *bol* is less diversified than was the case with its West Scandinavian cognate, *ból*, although the core meaning is fairly similar for both words. The second element, *staper*, is also a common linguistic constituent and has a broad fan of connotations in OSw, such as 'an area, place', 'a stand', 'a place where something

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163. The Swedish distribution of place-names in *bolstaper* is very restricted, and appears to be confined mainly to the lake *Mälaren* area in east-central Sweden. There is only one example of a *bolstaper*-place-name outside this area, namely *Bolstad* in Bolmsö sn., Jönköping Län. The remaining examples are limited to Uppsala Län, Västmanlands Län, and Östergötland Län. Finnish *bolstaper* place-names are found exclusively in the south-western parts of the country, in spite of the fact that a Swedish expansion into north-western Finland also took place. The south-western distribution fits well with the very limited Swedish dissemination to eastern-central parts of the country. It would also seem that the core expansion into Åland and south-western Finland must have come from the Uppland area.

164. *Sdw*, vol. I, p. 132.

stands or exists', 'a direction, side, part', or 'a village, town', and so forth.<sup>165</sup>

The original meaning of *bolstaper* is thus not easy to define. The two elements with which it is compounded are ordinary, commonly used nouns, carrying a range of meanings. The core meaning of *bol* seems to have been that of 'a farm and its land', whereas *staper* carries the general notion of 'a place'. The compounded meaning could be akin to 'the place of the landed farm'. It is not entirely certain how 'place' should be interpreted, though. 'Place' could either refer to actual farm buildings or it could refer to the entire entity including farm buildings, land, and water rights, etc. An additional complicating factor is the very long span of life *bolstaper* has had as a linguistic entity in Swedish. Whereas ON *bólstaðr* in Norway appears only to have been in general currency until the end of the Middle Ages, OSw *bolstaper* has been in use until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the modern Swedish form is *bolstad*. However, the connotations associated with this appellative have not developed very much over this long time-span, and the medieval connotations are typically close in meaning, if not equal, to the recent ones,<sup>166</sup> namely that of 'a farm': "... the godhe men [...] sagdo at engin ok then delin i akren la til theria *bolstadh*." ("... the honest men [...] said that the meadow and that part of the land belonged to their *farm*." [my translation]).<sup>167</sup>

Although *Sdw* divides this core meaning into either 'a dwelling, farm' or 'a farm, village', there is in reality very little evidence of a difference between these two meanings. The core connotation is of 'a farm' in general. There seem to be no external distinguishing features, such as size or utilisation, to spur the use of OSw *bolstaper* instead of other farm-appellatives. This meaning continued until well after the medieval period. In more recent times this core notion diversified. The word could either still be used about 'a farm' in general or refer to the 'main settled area of a farm', or even be used of 'a small settlement'.<sup>168</sup>

Alongside this general meaning of 'a farm', *bolstaper* also carried another connotation in the early Swedish sources. It was also capable of referring to land on its own, albeit within a farm structure. Both the *Sdw* and the *SAOB* state that *bolstaper* could also mean 'land belonging to a farm', used mostly in legal language in the medieval period:

165. *Ibid.*, vol. II.1, pp. 477-81.

166. Cf. *Sdw*, vol. I, p. 133 and *SAOB*, vol. 5, cols 3809-10.

167. *SDns*, vol. II, 115. Dated 1409.

168. Cf. *SAOB*, vol. 5, cols 3809-10.

giffuir jak [staphan vlfson] jwlata closter for mik ok minom forældrom til æwerdelika siæla rykt vi oresland jordh ij hossaby som hether *twna bolstadh* i twmbo sokn ...<sup>169</sup>

I [Staffan Ulfsson] give the monastery of Julita for mine and my parents' everlasting sole-tending six oresland land in Husby which is called *Tunabolstad* in Tumbo Parish ... [my translation]

The *Tunabolstad* referred to in this excerpt appears to be a plot of land subordinate to the village of Husby. According to the *Sdw*, a number of place-names appear with this meaning in various Swedish sources, as e.g. "in sundbybolstadhe"<sup>170</sup> ("the land belonging to Sundby"). Often, however, it is impossible to know whether the reference is to 'a farm (with its land)' or whether it is to 'land belonging to a farm or settlement'.<sup>171</sup>

It is interesting that *bolstaper* could embrace as diverse connotations as 'a farm' and a more specialised 'land belonging to a farm or settlement'. It is plausible that both connotations have roots in the same original meaning. For the connotations described here, the emphasis is typically on farming and land. There can be no farm without land (otherwise it would merely be a house), and the aspect of land appears to be of greater importance to *bolstaper* than it is with its ON equivalent and in this connection the meaning seems to have shifted from 'a landed farm' to 'land belonging to a farm or settlement'. This is not an unlikely supposition and would represent a natural development. Since both meanings appear equally early, it is fair to assume that the two connotations were well established at the time of recording. Additionally, sources show that both connotations remained more or less current until at least the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A number of constructions in *bolstaper* can be found in Swedish Medieval sources, such as *SD*, *SDns*, *SRP*, *SRPapp.* and *SMR*, and I have been able to locate no less than 41 constructions. However, only 13 of these are found to exist today as genuine *bolstaper* place-names. The remaining two-thirds are either place-names which have disappeared, purely appella-

169. Unpublished testament in *Riksarkivet*. Dated 1452.

170. *SD*, vol. 2, p. 531. Dated 1308.

171. *Sdw* also states an alternative meaning of 'a camp' carried by OSw *bolstaper*, a connotation especially evidenced in medieval Swedish biblical works. Since the notion of 'a camp' is only really used in a biblical context it is of no real relevance in this discussion and it will not be elaborated on any further.

tival constructions, or instances of the so-called 'source epexegetis'. The two latter types of construction are not place-names *per se*, although they may in some instances attain name status, as has indeed been the case in a couple of instances.

For appellative *bolstaper*-constructions to be found in the sources, it is necessary that *bolstaper* still exists as an appellative. I have pointed out earlier that this was the case up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, careful interpretation of each *bolstaper*-construction is essential because numerous factors are at play here. It goes without saying that if a construction is found today as a living place-name then all source-forms must be seen as relating to this function. On the other hand, if a construction only occurs once or twice in the sources, or if it appears several times but only in interrelated documents, it has to be borne in mind that this construction may not be a place-name. To make sure the construction is in fact a place-name, the sources either have to say so expressly, or other external factors, such as reciprocation with other constructions of the same type, or force of typology, have to suggest so strongly. The purely appellative constructions are typically constructions which signal the association of a farm (here the appellative *bolstaper*, m., 'a farm') with a person. Of the appellative constructions relating to a person's ownership of a farm, there is for instance the mention of one Karl Høse in 1435 who donates land in (an otherwise unknown) *hørse bolstadh* (SMR, no. 334). The Swedish scholar Lars Hellberg has interpreted *hørse* as being the same as the surname of the donator,<sup>172</sup> a point on which he is very probably correct. On the face of it, this looks like a place-name, and indeed Hellberg interpreted it as such. However, since it appears only once in the sources together with the mention of the man who appears to be the original owner, there is reason to assume that this is not a place-name but an appellative construction. It is identical to, for instance, an appellative construction such as 'John's house', i.e. the house which John lives in or owns. When John moves from his house, the house ceases to be termed 'John's house' – in other words it does not gain place-name status. The same seems to have been the case with *hørse bolstadh* and probably also such constructions as *Ballabolstad*, Östergötland län (*Ballabolstadh* 1349 SD, 6, 1 p. 29), *Gullabolstad*, Odensala sn. (?), Stockholms län (*Gullabolstadhe* 1409 SDns, 2, p. 195), and *Swarwabolstad*, Vårfrukyrka sn., Upp-

172. Hellberg, Lars, 'Mansnamnet runsv. Haursi', in *Personnamnsstudier 1964. Tillägnade minnet av Ivar Modéer (1904-1960)*, (Stockholm, 1964), pp. 21-2.

sala län (Swarwa bolstade 1356 SD, 7.1, p. 75; Swarwabolstadi 1359 SD, 7.4, p. 193), which signal that *Balle*, *Gulle* and *\*Swarve* each own a farm. When any of these persons ceased to be associated with their farm, the construction also ceased to be used.

There is nothing that prevents place-names from being formed from such constructions, but only rarely do they appear to be formed with *bolstaper*. The only instance of this in the Swedish material is probably *Olsta*, Dingtuna sn., Västmanlands Län (Ollobolstad 1351 (SD, 6.1 p. 328); Ollæbolstadh 1375 (SD 7.2, p. 215)), which is a compound of the genitive sg. of the OSw personal name *Olle*, m., and OSw *bolstaper*, m., 'a farm'. The main difference between *Olsta* and the previously mentioned constructions is that *Olsta* has attained place-name status, whereas the others have not. At some stage, *Olsta* ceased to carry meaning and began to carry place-name function instead. Exactly when this change occurred is hard to say, but if a construction is found numerous times or over a long period of time (without the source material being interrelated), the construction has turned into a name. Of the above mentioned constructions, only *Olsta* can fulfil these premises.

Another group of *bolstaper*-constructions of the type inhabitant designation + *bolstaper* also appear not to be place-name constructions. In a document from 1436 (SMR, no. 474) the borders of a farm are said to: "løppa wt met Ekboo bolstadh" ("run out along with 'Ekboo bolstadh'" [my translation]). 'Ekboo' is an inhabitant designation to a locality called *Ekeby* in the parish of Skultuna, Västmanlands län. The final element, *-bo* is a typical inhabitant designation for a place-name in *-by*.<sup>173</sup> Indeed, one of the signatories of the document is a 'Mathis i Ekby'. It would be tempting to see 'bolstadh' as a place-name generic and this has so far generally been the case with occurrences like: *Frosbobilstad*, Södermanlands län? (in *frosbobilstat* 1321 (SD, 3, p. 601)), *Nerbobilstad*, Uppsala län (*Nerbobilstadh* 1316 (SD, 3, p. 283)), *Norboabolstad*, Danmarks sn., Uppsala län (jn *norboabolstad* 1291 (SD 2, pp. 103)), *Norbobilstad*, S:t Ilians sn., Västmanlands län (in *norbobilstad* 1320 (SD 3, p. 52)), and *Widbobilstad*, Dingtuna sn., Västmanlands län (*Widhbobilstad* 1386 (SRP 2, no. 3125)), etc. However, if this is so, the localities to which these forms refer must be place-names in their own right. If we return to 'Ekboo bolstadh', the locality referred to does not appear to be different from *Ekeby*. Since

173. Cf. Hellquist, Elof, *De svenska ortnamnen på -by. En öfversikt*, (Gothenburg, 1918), p. 98.

the document stipulates the borders of farms, it would be natural to define which plots of land lie contiguously. There is reason to assume that 'bolstadh' is instead an appellative with the meaning of 'land belonging to a farm', which this appellative also carries. The meaning of 'Ekboo bolstadh' would then be 'the land belonging to the inhabitants of *Ekeby*', i.e. the entirety of *Ekeby* with settlements, land, and water-rights, etc.

Are the other occurrences of this type also appellative constructions? *Frosbolstad* and *Nerbobolstad* are only mentioned once and from their sparse description, I cannot make out their exact status. *Nordboabolstad* is mentioned no less than four times. It is also termed in villa nordbolstad in 1344 (SD 5, p. 244), so it would also seem to be a place-name. Nevertheless, the locality to which it refers seems to be the present *Norrby* in Danmarks sn., so it does not appear to have attained place-name status in spite of its many appearances as a variant of *Norrby*. The same seems to be the case with *Norbobolstad*, which is first mentioned as *norby* in 1312 (SD 3, p. 52). What is common for the appearance of *Norboabolstad* and *Norbobolstad* in the sources, is that they occur together with *bolstaper*-constructions (*Hubstabilstad* and *Wadbybolstad*, see below) which are so-called 'source expegetetic' forms. These may have helped to inspire the use of *bolstaper* with these inhabitant designations. *Widbolbolstad* is mentioned in three interrelated documents together with a *Westyrbolstad*. Whereas *Westyrbolstad* may be a now-lost *bolstaper*-place-name, *Widbolbolstad* appears to refer to the modern farm of *Viby*. In view of this, there is reason to assume that the type of construction discussed here should not be considered to be a place-name construction, although a form like *Norboabolstad* seems to have been on the point of attaining place-name status.

In many instances the type of construction, inhabitant designation + *bolstaper* is found occurring together with the group of so-called 'source expegetetic' forms. This kind of construction arises from a special need for specification of the type of locality to which there is reference.<sup>174</sup> In this respect *bolstaper* should then probably be seen as a legal term, which possibly also applies to the group of constructions evaluated above. For instance, the now-lost place-name of \**Kynge* in Vaksala sn., Uppsala Län, appears as in *kyunge* in 1316 (SD 3, p. 283), in 1344 as *kinngabolstad* (SD 5, p. 306), *kyunge* (SD 5, p. 316), or *kyngiabolstadh* (SD 5, p. 333). The

174. Dalberg, Vibeke, *Stednavneændringer og funktionalitet*, (Copenhagen, 1991), pp. 87-90.

sources show great fluctuation between the forms, even within the same year. There does not appear to be any difference in the locality referred to by the various forms. This has meant that I have instead chosen to see *bolstaper* as being in apposition to \**Kynge* – in other words it specifies the kind of locality that \**Kynge* is.

Similar constructions are, or appear to be, found in source-forms for the names: *Berga*, Vassunda sn., Stockholms Län (in villa berghar 1321 (SD 3, p. 508), in berghabolstadi 1325 (SD 3, p. 701), B[e]rhg[a] bolstap 1357 SD 7.2, 346), Berghabolstadh 1409 (SDns 2, p. 205)); \**Bolstaby*, Vendel sn., Uppsala Län (Bolstaby bolstat 1415 (SDns 3, p. 40)); \**Hubsta*, Danmarks sn., Uppsala Län (jn hubstabolstad 1291 (SD 2, pp. 103-4)); ?\**Lyda*, Västmanlands Län ? (in lydæbolstadt 1291 SD 2, p. 116)); \**Scøtlinge* Erentuna sn., Uppsala Län (in scotingabolstadh 1297-1308 SD (2, p. 687); scøthlingabolstadh 1344 SD (5, p. 352); in villa scøtlinge 1347 SD (5, 674)); *Sundby*, Håtuna sn., Uppsala Län (in sundbybolstadhe 1308 (SD 2, p. 531), Sundby 1348 (SD 6.1, 1)); \**Thormundsta*, Rekarne, Södermanlands Län (thormundstæ bolstad 1291 (SD 2, p. 115)); *Vallby*, S:t Ilians sn., Västmanland (in villa vadhby 1312 (SD 3, p. 52), jn wadbybolstad 1320 (SD 3, p. 483); in Wadby 1355 (SD 6, 1 p. 569), etc.). As was the case with \**Kynge*, the *bolstaper*-constructions here do not in any instance signal that they have a different denotation from the locality denoted by their first element. Furthermore, not a single one of this type of *bolstaper*-constructions survives today. To me, this is a strong indication that these constructions have never been place-names in their own right. They seem to have had legal significance only and did not exist outside this context. This is the reason why they never attained place-name status.

With the above constructions identified as not being place-names proper, the number of actual Swedish *bolstaper*-place-names found in the early sources does not amount to more than 22 examples, of which three are simplex formations.<sup>175</sup> As a place-name element, *bolstaper* carries both

175. **Bollstad**, Bolmsö sn., Jönköpings län (*Boollstadh* 1392 SRP (2, no. 2652); *aff Bolstad* 1414 SDns (2, p. 847); *boolstadh* 1426 Rep. (1.iii.6238); *boolstæde* 1466 Rep. (2.i.2044); [*bullsta*] 1996 Fridell); **Bolsta**, Vaksala sn., Uppsala län, Sweden (jn *bols-tum* 1316 SD (3, p. 283); j *Bolæstum* 1357 SD (7.2, p. 230); j *Boliston* 1358 SD (7.3, p. 32); j *Bolistum* 1358 SD (7.3, p. 84); j *bolistum* 1365 SD (8, p. 682); i *Bolstom* 1403 DSns (1, p. 252); i *Bolistum* 1405 DSns (1, p. 405); i *Bolstom* 1410 DSns (2, p. 300); i *Bolsta* 1420 SMR (no. 150)); **Bolstan**, Vessland sn., Uppsala län, Sweden (i *bolsta* 1547 Uppl. (1547: 6 A); *Bolstaf* 1635 Rhez. Monum. Upl. (p. 183); *Boostan* 1686 red.-jb; [*bo:stan*] 1951 Linde (p. 49)).



the general meaning of 'a farm' and that of 'land belonging to a farm'. The normal meaning found with the Swedish place-name material is the former, although the latter is known from one instance, *Tunabolstad* (see above), albeit in a few cases the exact denotation is not known. The interpretation of place-names in *bolstader* is generally not complicated and only the specific of the sparsely documented *Litisbolstad*<sup>176</sup> has caused problems of interpretation.

Of the remaining specifics in constructions which I have found to be most likely genuine place-name formations, the vast majority refer to a relationship of the locality of some kind or another. For instance, the specific of two place-names, *Svingbolstad* and *Tunabolstad*, presumably characterise the locality in relation to another named place-name entity, such as the nearby *Svina*, and a now lost *\*Tuna* (which also forms part of the local parish-name *Tumbo*), whereas the specific of *Holmsta* (< OSw *holme*, m., usually 'an islet' but here 'an elevation in the terrain, a hill') refers to an unnamed locality.<sup>177</sup> More often than not, however, the specific refers to the relative position of the locality in relation to a focal point, as is the case with *Nedersta* (< OSw *nipre*, comp adj., 'lower'), *Norbolsta* (< OSw *nordher*, adv., 'north'), *Sydrabolstad* (< OSw *sypre*, comp adj., 'more southerly'), *Vestrabolstad*, *Wæstrabolstad* (< OSw *västre*, comp adj., 'more westerly'), *Westyrbolstad* (< OSw *väster*, adv., 'west') and *Østrabolstad* (< OSw *östre*, comp adj., 'more easterly').<sup>178</sup> The specifics

176. **Litisbolstad** †, Nysätra sn., Uppsala län (*Jn litisbolstad* 1344 SD (5, p. 328)). This name is somewhat enigmatic. It is mentioned only once in sources. Attempts at analysis have been made by Hellquist (1904, p. 90) as either the personal name *\*Litir*, m., or more recently by Elmevik (1967, pp. 18-9) as the genitive sg. of either OSw *\*lytir*, m., 'an interpreter of lots, diviner, priest' or OSw *\*Lytir*, m., a byname of *Frö* (= ON *Freyr*). However, I find neither interpretation very convincing and for that reason I have left the interpretation of the specific open.

177. **Svingbolsta**, Östervåla sn., Uppsala län (*Swinabolstad* 1316 SD (3, p. 268); *Suinebolsta* 1544 jþ; *i Suinebolsta* 1544 UDb (5, p. 9); *Suijnebolsta* 1549 jþ; *Swinebolsta* 1590 jþ; *Swinnbolsta* 1610 jþ; *Suinebolsta* 1610 jþ; [*svy.nbøſſta*], [*svi.nbøſſta*], [*svinbollsta*] 1951 Linde (p. 266); **Tunabolstad** †, Tumbo sn., Södermanlands län (*twna bolstad* 1452 RA (Unpublished will)); **Holmsta**, Munktorp sn., Västmanlands län (*i holmabolsta* 1386 SRP (2, no. 2191); *i holmabolstath* 1394 SRP (2, no. 2726); *i Holmabolstath* 1401 SDns (1, p. 58); *i Holmabolstadh* 1402 SDns (1, p. 139); *i Holmbostadh* 1403 SDns (1, p. 277); [*hol[m]sta*] 1951 Linde (p. 266)).

178. **Nedersta**, Tortuna sn., Uppsala län (*in Nydrabolstadhi* 1350 SD (6, p. 210); *i nedh[e]rsta* 1494 RAP (28/10 1494); [*ne:sta*] 1951 Linde (p. 267)); **Norbolstad**, Munktorps sn., Västmanlands län, Sweden (*i Norbolstadh* 1412 SDns (2, p. 526));



of an additional five place-names signal other types of relationship, to e.g. an institution, such as the OSw pagan deities *Närpa(r)*, m., and *Ull*, m., apparently contained in *Nalbesta*, *Ulbersta* and *Ullbolsta*, or an administrative unit as in *Timmersta* (< OSw *þing*, n. 'an assembly'), or even ownership, as in the case of *Olsta* (see above).<sup>179</sup>

The categories in which a quality or the usage of the locality is described are far less well represented in the Swedish material. Exemplifying the former category may be the now lost *Akærbolstad* (< OSw *aker*, m., 'a field, a cultivated field'), whose specific may qualify the locality in terms of marking its 'cultivatedness'. In the place-name *Frøbbesta* (probably < Sw *frö*, adj., 'fertile') may be another specific denoting a quality of the locality, in this case a perceived one.<sup>180</sup> There seems only to be one member of the latter category in the Swedish material, namely *Hälje-*

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**Sydhærbolstad** †, Västmanland län, Sweden (*Sydhærbolstadh* 1356 SRP (2, no. 2493)); **Væstræbolstad** †, Låssa sn., Uppsala län (*in væstræbo[l]stadhinum* 1311 SD (3, p. 35)); **Wæstræbolstad** †, Näs sn., Uppsala län (*i Wæstræboolstadh* 1402 SDns (1, p. 136)); **Westyrbolstad** †, Dingtuna sn., Västmanlands län (*j westyrbolstad* 1386 SRP (2, no. 2273); *Westyrbolstaad* 1387 SRP (2, no. 2341); *Væstra Boolstadh* 1400 SRP (2, no. 3113); *Vestir Bolstad* 1400 SRP (2, no. 3125)); **Østræbolstad** †, Låssa sn., Uppsala län, Sweden (*in østræbolstadhinum* 1311 SD (3, p. 35)).

179. **Nalbesta**, Munktorp sn., Västmanlands län (*ij nærdebolstadh* 1474 SRPapp. (13/10); *nærdebolstadh* 1483 SRPapp. (2/10); [*nal[v]sta*] 1967 Elmevik); **Ulberstad**, Skärkind sn., Östergötlands län (*af vllabolstaþ* 1367 SD (9, p. 178); *af vllabolstadh* 1371 SD (10, p. 31); *J vllabolstadhæ* 1375 SRP (1 no. 1135); *Ullabolstad*, 1378 SRP (1, no. 1311); *i Ollabolstad* 1420 SDns (3, p. 564); *i Ollabolstad* 1420 SDns (3, p. 566); *Wlbosta* 1548 jþ; *Vlbersta* 1680 jþ; [*ulbæsta*] 1951 Lind (p. 266)); **Ullbolsta**, Jumkil sn., Uppsala län (*de vllabolstad* 1316 SD (3, p. 263); *in vllabolstadh* 1316 SD (3, p. 283); [*ullbo:stæ*] 1951 Linde (p. 267)); **Timmersta**, Säby sn., Västmanlands län (*in thyngbolstum* 1344 SD (5, p. 386); *in thinbylst[u]m* 1371 SD (10, p. 107); [*tim(m)æsta*] 1951 Linde (p. 267)); **Olsta**, Dingtuna sn., Västmanlands län (*Ollabolstad* 1351 SD (6, p. 328); *Ollæbolstadh* 1357 SD (7.2, p. 215)).

180. **Akærbolstad** †, Snävinge hd., Uppsala län (*i Akærbolstadh* 1414 SDns (2, p. 770)); **Frøbbesta**, Odensvi sn., Västmanlands län (*i Frøbols[et] ?* 1403 SDns (1, p. 278); *i frøbolstadh* 1432 RAP (19/1 1432); *i ffrøbøssta* 1527 UUBPer; [*frøpsta*] 1951 Linde (p. 267)).

The Etymology of the latter name has been disputed. It suggested that the specific contains either the name of the Norse god *Frøj*, m., or *Fröja*, f., god and goddess of fertility (Ståhl 1985, p. 44). However, since the written forms lack any genitive marker, one has to be cautious about attempting this interpretation, as it is unlikely that the genitive markers -s, -a(r) and -u, together with the preceding [-j-] would have been lost as early as the documentation shows. It is altogether more probable, as Elmevik (1997, p. 110) has suggested, that the specific is Sw *frö*, adj. 'fertile'.

*bolsta*, whose specific appears to contain OSw *helgi*, the weak form of *helagher*, adj., 'holy', thus forming a parallel to the Norwegian material.<sup>181</sup>

The popularity of *bolstaper* in Finland greatly exceeds its popularity in Sweden. There are no less than 49 localities with this place-name element in Finland. However, unlike in Sweden, where most *bolstaper*-localities appear always to have denoted settlements, more than half of the Finnish place-names denote fields or groups of fields.<sup>182</sup> The Finnish *bolstaper* material is generally not complicated, owing partly to its being well documented and partly to its being fairly recent.

There may be two reasons for this. Firstly, the localities denoting fields may have undergone a change in denotation from originally denoting settlements to denoting fields. Secondly, the field-denotation may have been spurred by the alternative appellative meaning of 'land belonging to a farm' which OSw *bolstaper*/Sw *bolstad* also carries. From a formal point of view, either explanation is possible. However, since field denotation is also (sparsely) attested in constructions of this type in Sweden and since this meaning is also recorded with appellatives, the latter explanation seems to be the most likely one. In any case, I have chosen to view the two denotations as different original onomastic applications.

There is a total of 22 settlement names, of which 5 are simplex names<sup>183</sup> and 17 are compound formations. All of these must be regarded as original settlement names, with the possible exception of *Lillbolsta* and *Storbolsta* in Ingå sn., Nyland län. Typologically speaking, these two names are closer to field-names. However, since I have been able to find

181. **Häljebolsta**, Västeråker sn., Uppsala län (*j helghabolstaþu[m]* 1356 SD (7.2, p. 120); *ij hælgabolstadhu[m]* 1376 Hagunda tingsplats perg.-brev i orig. i Krapperrupsarkivet; [*hæljåbåsta*] 1951 Linde (p. 266); [*hærrbåsta*] 1951 Linde (p. 266)).

182. Harling-Kranck, Gunilla, *Namn på åkrar, änger och hagar*, (Helsingfors, 1990), p. 85. Cf. also Hellberg, Lars, 'Ortnamnen och den svenska bosättningen på Åland', in *SNF* 68 (Helsingfors, 1987), pp. 142-67.

183. **Bollstad**, Ingå sn., Nyland län (*Bolstadaby* 1447 NO (p. 219; Pgt); *Bolstadh* 1474 NO (pp. 219-20; H); *Bolstadh* 1536 NO (p. 220; B III, p. 67)); **Bollstad**, Pojo sn., Nyland län (*Båhlstad byen* 1521 NO (p. 542; H); *Bolstad* 1545 NO (p. 542; 2947, f. 47); *Bolstad* 1547 NO (p. 542; 2957, f. 12); *Bolstadh* 1552 NO (p. 542; 3002, f. 16)); **Bollstad**, Sjundeå sn., Nyland län (*Bolstadz bol* 1451 NO (p. 651; H) *Bolstad* 1520 NO (p. 651; H); *Bolstad bol* 1540 NO (p. 651; 2919, f. 39)); **Bollstad**, Pargas sn., Åboland län; **Puosta**, Vemo sn., Egentlige Finland. (in *Bolstad* 1350 SD (6, 185); in *Bolstad* 1351 Svartboken (p. 86); *Postha* 1477).

no evidence of their having other than settlement denotation, I have chosen to consider them to be settlement names.

Compared with the Swedish *bolstapel* material, the equivalent Finnish settlement-name material differs notably on a number of points. For instance, the number of specifics describing a relationship of sorts of the locality is much less represented here. In two cases the topographical relationship of a locality is marked in comparison with an unnamed topographical feature, as in *Enbolstad* (< OSw *ända*, gen. sg. of *ände*, m., 'an end, a point, the outermost part') and *Strömbolstad* (< OSw *strömbær*, m., 'a fast-running stream'); only once is the locality marked by its relative position, as in *Högbolsta* (< OSw *högher*, adj., 'high'). The only other instance in which a specific marks a relationship of sorts in the Finnish settlement-name material is with the name *Trädbollstad* (< OSw *þrätta*, f., 'a dispute'), where the specific seemingly refers to an external event to which the naming is related, namely a dispute.<sup>184</sup>

The settlement-material in Finland is rather more prolific when it comes to describing a quality of the settlement, either in terms of the size of the locality, as is the case with the names; *Lillbolsta*, *Lillbolstad* (< OSw *litle*, adj., 'small, little'), *Mjölbolstad* (< OSw *mykil*, adj., 'large, great') and *Storbolsta* (< OSw *stori*/Sw *storr*, adj., 'large, great'), or general shape of the locality, as in *Bredbolstad* (< OSw *breþær*, adj., 'wide'), the relative age of the locality, as in *Nybolstad* (< OSw *nyr*, adj., 'new'), the texture or consistency of the land on which the locality is situated, as seen in the names of *Brännbolstad*, *Bränbolsta* (both < OSw *bränna*, f., 'a burning, a fire') and *Torrbolstad* (< OSw *þor*, adj., 'dry'). Additionally, creatures, plant-growth and other features existing at the locality are often also men-

184. **Enbolstad**, Finström sn., Landskapet Åland (*Andhebolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 24; 2598, f. 46); *Endabolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 24; 2598, f. 35); *Endebolsta* 1544 ÅO (p. 24; 2603, f. 9); *Andebolstadh* 1544 ÅO (p. 24; 2603, f. 85); *Ändebolstadh* 1546 ÅO (p. 24; 2610, f. 88); *Ändebolstadt* 1547 ÅO (p. 24; 2615, f. 48); *Endbolsta* 1554 ÅO (pp. 24-5; 2643, f. 11)); **Strömbolstad**, Sund sn., Landskapet Åland (*Strömbolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 171; 2598, f. 3); *Strömbolsta* 1544 ÅO (p. 171; 2603, f. 77); *Strömbolsta* 1546 ÅO (p. 171; A IX, p. 49); *Strombostad* 1552 ÅIRäKS; *Strömbollsta* 1559 ÅIRäKS; *Ströömbolstadh* 1581 ÅO (p. 171; 2808)); **Högbolsta**, Sund sn., Landskapet Åland (*Höghabulstad* 1431 ÅO (p. 164; A II, p. 85); *Höögbolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 164; 2598, f. 1); *Högbolsta* 1538 ÅO (p. 164; 2600, f. 11); *Höghbålsta* 1538 ÅO (p. 164; 2600, f. 31); *Högebolsta* 1544 ÅO (p. 164; 2603, f. 4)); **Trädbollstad**, Pojo sn., Nyland län, (*Trätebålsta* 1515 NO (p. 565; H); *Trettebolstad* 1549 NO (p. 565; 2975, f. 32); *Träbolsta* 1552 NO (p. 565; 3003, f. 15); *Trettebolstadh* 1554 NO (p. 565; 3027, f. 13), *Trädebolstad* 1556 NO (p. 565; 3058, f. 15); *Trättebolstad* 1556 NO (p. 565; 3058, f. 40).

tioned. Examples of this type of quality may be *Björnbollstad* (< OSw *biörn*, m., 'a bear'), *Kodbolsta* (< OSw *quāpa*, m., 'resin, gum from trees'), *Källbolstad* (< OSw *kälða*, f., 'a spring, a well') and *Tärnbolstad* (< OSw *tärn*, f., 'a tarn, a small lake or pond').<sup>185</sup> None of the Finnish settlement names refers to the usage of the locality, possibly signalling that the denotation inherent in the generic *bolstaper* must have been a fully adequate descriptive element.

The group of Finnish place-names with field-name denotation amounts to 27, of which 13 are simplex names<sup>186</sup> and 14 compounds. Of these, only

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185. **Lillbolsta**, S, Ingå sn., Nyland län; **Lillbolstad**, Hammarland sn., Landskapet Åland (*Lilljebolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 73; 2598, f. 34); *Lillebolsta* 1538 ÅO (p. 73; 2600, f. 22); *Lillebolstadh* 1545 ÅO (p. 73; 2606, f. 56); *Lisbolsta* 1547 ÅO (p. 73; 2611, f. 37); *Lillebolstad* 1549 ÅO (p. 73; 2625, f. 25)); **Mjölbolstad**, Karis sn., Nyland län (*Myklebolstad* 1427 FMU (II, p. 164); *Mögelbostad* 1540 NO (p. 260; 2948, f. 31); *Miölbostad* 1541 NO (p. 260; 2926, f. 11); *Mögelboolstadh* 1544 NO (p. 260; 2924, f. 4); *Mögelbolstadt* 1544 NO (p. 260; 2940); *Mölbolsta* 1592 NO (p. 260; 3468, f. 80)); **Storbolsta**, Ingå sn., Nyland län; **Bredbolstad**, Hammarland sn., Landskapet Åland (*Bredbolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 68; 2598, f. 34); *Breedbolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 68; 2598, f. 43); *Bredebolsta* 1544 ÅO (p. 68; 2603, f. 16); *Bredhebolstad* 1546 ÅO (p. 68; 2610, f. 37)); **Nybolstad**, Ingå sn., Nyland län; **Brännbolstad**, Sund sn., Landskapet Åland (*Brendebolstadh* 1397 Svartboken (p. 212); *Brendabulstadh* 1431 ÅO (p. 160; A II, p. 76); *Brendabulstad* 1433 ÅO (p. 160; A II, p. 95); *Bränbolstadh* 1484 ÅO (p. 160; H); *Brendebolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 160; 2598, f. 32)); **Brännbolsta**, Ingå sn., Nyland län; **Torrbolstad**, Finström sn., Landskapet Åland (*Torbolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 34; 2598, f. 24); *Torrebolsta* 1539 ÅO (p. 34; 2599, p. 49); *Torrebolstadh* 1545 ÅO (p. 34; 2606, f. 58); *Torbolstad* 1551 ÅO (p. 34; 2633, f. 74)); **Björnbollstad**, Karis sn., Nyland län (*Biörnbolstad* 1544 NO (p. 247; 2939, f. 51); *Biörnebolstad* 1547 NO (p. 247; 2957, f. 26); *Biörnebolsta* 1551 NO (p. 247; 2992, f. 30); *Biörnebolstad* 1552 NO (p. 247; 3002, f. 139); *Biörnebolst* 1553 NO (p. 247; 3016, f. 6); *Biörnn bolstad* 1556 NO (p. 247; 3058, f. 39)); **Kodbolsta**, now Bolstaholm, Geta sn., Landskapet Åland (*Quadhabolstat* 1406 FMU (II, p. 65); *i Quadhabolstat* 1406 SDns (I, p. 606); *Kädbolstad*, *Codbolsta* 1435 ÅO (p. 61; H); *Koldebolstad* 1483 ÅO (p. 61; H); *Kädbåhlstadh* 1484 ÅO (p. 61; H); *Codebolsta* 1492 ÅO (p. 61; H); *Kodbolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 61; 2598, f. 49); *Kädhabolstadh* 1590 ÅO (p. 61; 2814, f. 33)); **Källbolstad**, Esbo sn., Nyland län (*Kellebolstad* 1540 NO (p. 159; 2948, f. 107); *Keldebolstadt* 1544 NO (p. 159; 2940, f. 65); *Keldebolstad* 1552 NO (p. 159; 3002, f. 74); *Kielldebolstadh* 1559 NO (p. 159; 3166, f. 60)); **Tärnbolstad**, Finström sn., Landskapet Åland (*Ternabulstad* 1429 FMU (II, p. 439); *Tærnabulstad* 1431 ÅO (p. 34; A IV, p. 4); *Ternabolsta* 1537 ÅO (p. 34; 2598, f. 35); *Teernabolsta* 1539 ÅO (p. 34; 2642, f. 9); *Tärnebolstad* 1545 ÅO (p. 34; 2606, f. 57); *Ternbolstadh* 1546 ÅO (p. 34; 2610a, f. 6); *Tern bolsta* 1591 ÅO (p. 34; 2815b, f. 51)).
186. **Bolstan**, Finström sn., Landskapet Åland (*Borstan* 1958 OAU (Recorded by A. Rostvik)); **Bolstan**, Finström sn., Landskapet Åland; **Bolstan**, Finström sn., Landskapet Åland (*Båhlstad* 1746 LSA (Å 15 5/1-2)); **Bolstan**, Hammarland sn., Landskapet

the name *Säbbolsta* cannot be satisfactorily interpreted.<sup>187</sup> Compared with the *bolstaper* settlement-name material, the Finnish *bolstaper/bolstad* place-names with field-name denotation are much more limited in the range of specifics. As would be expected of place-names with field-name denotation, the majority of compound formations, ten in all, refer to the quality of the locality, and only three signal the relationship of the locality. It is perhaps surprising to note that none of the *bolstaper/bolstad* names which refer to fields state the usage of the locality, as it would not be unimaginable that the usage and utilisation of an area under agricultural management would be related to by means of its usage potential.

Of *bolstaper/bolstad* compounds which signal the quality of a locality, the majority relate to the general size of the locality. However, the number of different specifics only amounts to two, which as such form a contrastive pair. Five names in *Lill-* have Sw *lille*, adj., 'small, little', for specific, while only two are modified by Sw *stor*, adj., 'large, great', i.e. with a specific in *Stor-*. Four of these specifics are applied as reciprocating pairs. Twice the material and texture of a locality has been felt to be as important a quality as to spur its use in the names *Skarpbolsta* (< Sw *skarp*, adj., 'sharp, dry, hard') and *Torrbolsta* (< Sw *torr*, adj., 'dry'). In *Tärrbolstad*, the specific appears to be Sw *tärn*, sb., 'a tarn, a small lake or pond', which may be argued to signal a quality of the locality.<sup>188</sup>

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Åland; **Bolstan**, Hammarland sn., Landskapet Åland (*Båhlstad uthiord* 1735 LSA (A 6 5/1-2)); **Bolstan**, Jomala sn., Landskapet Åland; **Bolstan**, Jomala sn., Landskapet Åland (*Båhlstad, Borstan* 1740 LSA (7 4/1)); **Bolstan**, Kimito sn., Åboland län; **Bolstan**, Lemland sn., Landskapet Åland (*Borstan* 1845 LSA (10 12/12)); **Bolstan**, Sund sn., Landskapet Åland; **Borstan**, Jomala sn., Landskapet Åland (*Borsta åker* 1759 LSA (Å 7 12/5-6)); **Bolstarna** (Hopborsten), Sund sn., Landskapet Åland (*Båhlsta Eng* 1650 LSA (A 2d 85); *Borstarna* 1959 OAU (Recorded by A. Rostvik); *Hopborsten* 1959 OAU (Recorded by A. Rostvik)); **Båtsta** (Bolsta), Kyrkslätt sn., Nyland län (*Bolstan, Bolstad ängen* c. 1800 LSA (B 19 4/1); *Bolsta, Båtsta* 1914 SLS (238)).

187. **Säbbolsta**, Jomala sn., Landskapet Åland (*Sebolsta åkern* 1800 LSA (7 32/14)).

The specific might ultimately be from OSw *sär*, m., 'a sea, a lake', although the present day short vowel does not correspond with the OSw form, which is long. However, the vowel may have been shortened owing to its compound position.

188. **Lillbollstan**, Finström sn., Landskapet Åland; *Lillbollstan* 1776 LSA (3 18/1)); **Lillbolsta**, Ingå sn., Nyland län, Finland; **Lillbolsta**, Lemland sn., Landskapet Åland; **Lillbolstan**, Tenala sn., Nyland län; **Lillborsten**, Finström sn., Landskapet Åland (*Lillborsten* 1958 OAU (Collected by A. Rostvik)); **Skarpbolsta**, Hammarland sn., Landskapet Åland (*Skarpbollstad* 1759 LSA (6 14/3)); **Storbollstan**, Finström sn., Landskapet Åland (*Storbollstan* 1776 LSA (3 18/1)); **Storbolstan**, Tenala sn., Nyland län; **Torrbolsta** (Bolsta), Karis sn., Nyland län; **Tärrbolstad**, Sund sn., Landskapet Åland (*Terrbollsta åker* 1804 LSA (15 19/43)).

The remaining three names with field-name denotation all categorise the locality in relation to topographical relation. One, *Kullbolstad* (< Sw *kulle*, sb., 'a rounded hill-top') is characterised by its position in relation to a non-name-bearing feature. The specifics of the remaining two compounds both state the position of the locality in relation to a focal point: *Lågbolstad* (< Sw *låg*, adj., 'low') and *Norrbolsta* (< Sw *nord/norr*, adv., 'north').<sup>189</sup>

The life-span of *bolstaper/bolstad* as a place-name element was considerably longer in East Scandinavian than that of West Scandinavian *bólstaðr*. As an appellative, it was active from the Viking Age to at least as late as the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Ch. 2.2., above). Theoretically, this means that it could be used as a place-name element over the same period. Indeed, it is possible that some place-names in *bolstaper* have been formed after the end of the Middle Ages. However, there is no mention of such late formations in any of the secondary literature on the subject. Hence, I feel sure that my focusing only on the oldest printed sources has not disturbed the general picture. It appears that the period of time in which *bolstaper* was part of the local Swedish and Finno-Swedish onomasticon was considerably shorter than that of its appellative use.

Since *bolstaper* is found both in Sweden and in Finland, the Swedish material itself can certainly be dated to the period of Swedish expansion into Finland. The first large-scale expansion into Finland is thought to have come in the wake of the first crusades. The first crusade dates from the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It must therefore be assumed that the peak of onomastic use for this element must have been slightly earlier than or concurrent with this date. The coining of place-names of this origin in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century certainly does not contradict this, although it indicates that the element was still active up until at least this date. On the basis of these non-linguistic dating criteria, it is possible to establish a *terminus ante quem* for place-names in *bolstaper* in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This is a late date in comparison with that for the West Scandinavian place-name material but quite reasonable when the local appellative use of this element is taken into consideration.

Does this late *terminus ante quem*, then, mean that the onomastic use of OSw *bolstaper* is later than its West Scandinavian cognate? If we turn to

189. **Kullbolstad** †, R, Sund sn., Landskapet Åland (*Kullbohlsta* c. 1650 LSA (A 2 d 94-95)); **Lågbolstad**, Jomala sn., Landskapet Åland; **Norrbolsta**, Sund sn., Landskapet Åland (*Norrebohlsta* c. 1650 LSA (A 2 d 94-95)).

the actual place-name material, we notice that there are certain specific elements of a cultural and institutional significance that may help in the answering of this question. These are the specific elements that relate to religious institutions. These are exclusively the names of pagan Norse deities, such as *Ull*, m., and *Närþar*, m. (an older genitive form of *Njord*, m.). There are no references to Christian cultic activity, such as churches or the use of saints' names, etc. This is to me a clear indication that this place-name element was active also in the pre-Christian era, i.e. in the Viking Age. The problem is that these specific elements do not allow for dating closer than 'prior to the introduction of Christianity'.

The result of this attempt to date the Swedish *bolstaper* place-name material is a not very satisfactory dating to the period from the Viking Age to approximately the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The major reason for this vague date is partly the limited material available and partly the lack of any safely determinable historical linguistic features applicable to this material. On the other hand, it is not difficult to envisage a long period of onomastic use, taking the extended appellative usage into consideration.

As mentioned above, the reason why *bolstaper/bolstad* is found in south-western Finland is because of a Swedish expansion into an area otherwise dominated by a Finno-Samic culture. As a result of this, the *terminus ante quem* cannot be earlier than the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and with the secondary nature of this place-name element in mind, I would think not earlier than 1200. Unfortunately, there is no firm language historical evidence to support this date, but the fact that there is no reference to pagan cultic practice in the place-name material supports a date of bestowing the names after the introduction of Christianity, a result of which were the crusades. Besides, there is no dispute about the historical date for the crusades, nor is there any doubt about the subsequent settlement in south-western Finland as the result of these historical events.<sup>190</sup>

The first Finnish reference to a *bolstaper* place-name is in *Svartboken* as early as 1397 (*Brännbolstad*, see footnote above), although the majority of names are not mentioned until the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nonetheless, since for instance OSw *ände*, m., has retained its weak masculine genitive singular form in *-a* in the old forms for *Enbolstad* in Finstöms sn., Åland, it is fairly safe to say that this name must have been given prior to

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190. Cf. e.g. the statement "The setto thet land med cristna men..." which translates into: "Settled the land with Christian men..." [my translation], from Jansson, Sven-Bertil (ed.), *Erikskrönikan*, (Stockholm, 1986), p. 32.



1400, when the genitive ending in *-s* starts to become the norm.<sup>191</sup> Similarly, OSw *tärn*, n., does not show secondary genitive sg. forms in *-s* either in the earliest forms for *Tärnbolstad*, Finström sn., Åland (1429 Ternabulstad, 1431 Tærnabulstad). For these two names, there are good reasons for dating them to before 1400. The rest of the material does not contradict a date of coinage prior to this date either, although there is nothing which speaks against one or two of the place-names being a little younger than 1400. Hence, I will date the Finnish settlement-denoting *bolstaper* material to no earlier than 1200 but in the majority of cases to before 1400, for the reasons stated above.

The Finnish place-name material with field denotation may theoretically be of the same date. However, owing to the belated recording of these place-names, there is at least reason to believe that this denotation was active over a longer period of time than was the settlement denotation. On the other hand, did it also come into use early? Since field denotation is also found among the earliest Swedish *bolstaper* place-names (in the sense: 'land belonging to a farm'), this is possible. The fact that a number of simplex place-names in particular in this group have the suffixed definitive article in *-an* is no criterion for a late date of coinage, as the generic element of a place-name in the Scandinavian languages normally follows the normal morphological development of the language.<sup>192</sup> Neither do the recent attempts at re-etymologising some of the generic endings to *borstan* (sw. *borste*, sb., denotes a species of thistle) offer any help in dating this material – it only serves to show that Sw *bolstad*, sb., is no longer in use as an appellative.

The earliest recorded instances of the field-names I have been able to obtain are from 1650, but the majority, if they have recorded source-forms at all, are from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The records do not, thus, offer any satisfactory *terminus ante quem*, although it must be assumed that the majority of the field-names were formed prior to at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The specific material itself does not offer any suggestion as to a more exact time of coinage. I, therefore, find myself forced to date the place-names of this type of denotation to within a rather broad time-scale of between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

191. Bergman, Gösta, *Kortfattad svensk språkhistoria*, (Stockholm, 1995), p. 78.

192. Cf. Christensen (Dalberg), V. & Sørensen, J. Kousgård, *Stednavneforskning 1*, (Copenhagen, 1972), p. 171.



## 9. Conclusion

It has traditionally been assumed that there were some 340 place-names in ON *bólstaðr*, m., whereas the East Scandinavian cognate, OSw *bolstaper*, m., has been considered to be found in no more than some 50-70 place-names. My research has shown that the former figure is somewhat higher. On the other hand, a fair proportion of the Scottish place-names hitherto considered to be from *bólstaðr* have other origins. The majority of these are place-names with modern reflexes in *-boll*, *-poll*, *-pol*, *-pool*, *-phuill*, etc., which instead originate from ON *ból*, n., 'a farm', ON *pollr*, m., 'a pool, a small rounded bay', or Gaelic *poll*, m., 'a pit, a pond', etc. Furthermore, a couple of Shetland and Orkney place-names with endings in *-bister* seem to originate from ON *staðir*, m. pl., 'a farm', and ON *setr*, n., 'a shieling', rather than *bólstaðr*. Their present-day similarity to modern *bólstaðr*-reflexes has been caused by a fusion of a final labial plosive element in the specific element with the generic. Additionally, the Northern Isles (and Caithness) *bólstaðr* reflex in *-bister* or *-bist* has been utilised in later centuries (16<sup>th</sup> century and onwards) as a place-name generic on analogy with the original *bólstaðr*-place-names. These are naturally not original place-names in ON *bólstaðr* but later formations with specifics probably taken from the local lexicon.

The non-genuine Scottish *bólstaðr* place-names amount to 83 place-names, while 5 of the Norwegian place-names investigated, 2 from Iceland, and 1 from the Faroe Islands, have also been found to be non-genuine. In total the non-genuine *bólstaðr*/*bolstaper* constructions number no less than 91 individual examples. Conversely, a large number of Scottish *bólstaðr* place-names have come to light as the result of my studies, as have a few Icelandic, Norwegian, and East Scandinavian place-names. Therefore, my core material consists of 442 place-names which originate or probably originate from ON *bólstaðr*/OSw *bolstaper*. This is as complete a compilation as has been made up to now.

On the documentary side, ON *bólstaðr*, in common with most other place-name elements, is unfortunate in having been an active place-name element before there was a written tradition, and this is also partly true for its East Scandinavian cognate. This means that all relevant documentary evidence is later than the coinage of these place-names – in the case of the Scottish *bólstaðrs* coinage usually predates documentary evidence by some five centuries or more. Naturally, this complicates the interpretation

of the individual place-names somewhat, and the interpretation of a fair number of place-names is less than rock solid, and some place-names have been altogether impossible to interpret satisfactorily. Nonetheless, the vast majority of place-names have been interpretable and it is these which form the basis for the later general syntactic-semantic analysis of the place-name material.

The question of the original meaning has been a core issue of this book. The typical dictionary definition of ON *bólstaðr* is that of 'a farm'. This vague and rather general definition was part of the reason for my taking an interest in this place-name element – it simply did not make sense. Not that the meaning 'a farm' is inherently wrong in any way, the known appellative use on the whole conveys this general meaning. Onomastically, however, the usage was more specific. The topographical study (Ch. 6.) has shown that *bólstaðr* was used about secondary farm settlements – settlements which were created as a result of the splitting up of a large settlement unit into smaller portions. The economic focus of these settlements seems first and foremost to have been on agriculture, although secondary means of subsistence, such as fishing, may have played a part as well. This specialised onomastic use was current in Norway, as well as in the Scottish colonies (and possibly in Iceland, too). There is no sign of a difference in denotation of the place-name element *bólstaðr* between the areas chosen for the topographical study (*Møre og Romsdal* and *Sogn og Fjordane* in Western Norway, and *Shetland*). In Western Norway, the onomastic use manifests itself mainly in two types of secondary settlement, either as a unit detached from the focal settlement, or as a unit carved out of the focal settlement. These applications are mirrored in Shetland, although a third type of secondary settlement is also visible in the toponymy there. This study has, therefore, not found that *bólstaðr* was ever used with the general meaning of 'a farm' in the colonies, as some earlier researchers have argued. There has been no indication in topographical evidence that the denotation in the colonial environment was any different from that in the homeland.

I have chosen not to employ rent and tax assessments as an additional extra-onomastic parameter. Although it is conceivable that such a parameter would have backed up the findings achieved through the topographical study and would possibly have been able to nuance the picture further, two major factors made me decide against using this parameter. Firstly, in no instance can the rental and tax values be said to reflect the original status of Viking-Age place-names, they are usually much younger – late Medieval at the earliest. This means that such a parameter does not

reflect a Viking-Age settlement situation but rather one several hundred years' later, which has undergone various, and in this specific respect quite irrelevant, modifications. In other words, the conclusions drawn from rental and tax information convey less than accurately the Viking-Age settlement situation. Secondly, there has been the time-factor. To achieve familiarity with the various assessment systems employed in the respective areas of study has been felt to be too time-consuming to offer any real reward other than what is already deducible from the present topographical study.

While the discussion is dealing with the extra-onomastic parameters, I feel there is a need to touch briefly on the archaeological survey. I had hoped that there would have been more to gain from this extra-onomastic criterion. However, there has been virtually no focus on settlements with names in *bólstaðr* from an archaeological perspective. This has meant that this parameter has contributed little more than a list of sporadic finds and possible sites of interest on the lands of settlements bearing this type of generic. This parameter has only been able to show that there has been human activity at some of these sites prior to the time at which it must be assumed that the settlements bearing names in *bólstaðr* were established.

Onomastically, this book has touched on a number of interesting points. Firstly, there is the question of the development or change in the specific inventory from the homeland (Norway) to the Norse colonies (the Scottish Isles, the Faroe Islands and Iceland). How much did the specific inventory change? Are foreign influences visible in the material? And did this type of generic continue as an active naming element after Norse had ceased to be spoken? Secondly, there is the question of whether analogy has played a role in naming with ON *bólstaðr*.

If we return to the first point. Early on, I became aware that tracing the development in the specific material and the extent of this depended largely on how the material was classified. There are two types of semantic classification of the specific material, either a word-semantic classification, or a name-semantic one. The one traditionally used is the word-semantic categorisation but I decided against using this, as it did little more than sort the material according to word-classes. This model does not explore motives behind naming, and since a change in naming surely reflects a change in the motives guiding naming, these motives, I felt, were the ones most essential to establish. Instead, I chose to use a name-semantic model in my general analysis of the specific material, as this model investigates the motives behind naming. The most comprehensive model available so far is one devised by the Finnish place-name scholar

Kurt Zilliacus. Since the place-name material he subjected to his theories was largely modern, a few minor adjustments were needed to make this model applicable to older place-name material, although none of the changes in any way interfered with Zilliacus' basic structure.

By using this model it has been possible to establish which naming motives were present in Norway and how these developed or withered in their new colonial environments. In Norway, the focus of naming lay mainly in describing the size of the locality (55% (group II.a.)), and in describing the topographical relationship of the locality (25% (group I.a.)), or the usage of the locality (13% (category III)), and only to a very small degree did the ownership or association of a locality have relevance (2% (group I.c.)). All other naming motives seem only to have featured marginally. The unusually high number of names describing the size of the locality might be the result of analogy, a point which I shall discuss later. Of the place-names indicating the topographical relationship of a locality, the majority were characterised by means of their relative position (14% (sub-group I.a.iii.)), whereas a characterisation in relation to a named feature (sub-group I.a.i.) or to an unnamed feature (sub-group I.a.ii.) figured less prominently (7% and 4% respectively).

Turning to Scotland, the naming motives appear to have been somewhat different. Firstly, there is a wider choice of naming motives. Here the most popular motives were: Topographical relationship (44% (group I.a.)), That which exists at or by (26% (group II.f.)), Institutional and administrative relationship (11% (group I.b.)), Shape (7% (group II.b.)), Associative relationship (4% (group I.c.)). If this list of most popular naming motives is compared with that from Norway, it immediately becomes clear that other factors have played a part in the coining of place-names in ON *bólstaðr*. For example, the most popular Norwegian naming motive, size (group II.a.), barely features in the Scottish place-name material, nor does the usage of a locality (category III), for that matter. In fact, neither of these motives are represented by more than 1% of the place-name material in Scotland! However, apart from these major differences, the naming motives present in the Scottish place-name material are to a large extent also found in the Norwegian material, albeit often in insignificant numbers.

What does this convey about the development in naming motives for *bólstaðr* from its Norwegian homeland to its new colonial setting? To me, the differences between the Norwegian and the Scottish place-name material reflect both a change in naming motives as well as a development and adaptation of an already known and proven specific inventory. But to

make the changes and the development manifest themselves, it is necessary to delve into the details of some of the naming motives. To take the changes first: that size (group II.a.) mattered less for *bólstaðr* in Scotland than in Norway is not surprising, as the high representation of this naming motive in Norway is probably owing to a fair amount of *imitative naming* which only seems to have had a relevance in the settlement structure there. It may seem more confusing that the utilisation (category III) of a locality is not represented to the same extent in the Scottish place-name material. However, if we look at the type of usage which is hinted at, it pertains solely to a religious significance. Being a settlement-name generic *par excellence* that is normally applied to agricultural units, a religious usage of the site would not be typical. Therefore, there is reason to believe that a religious usage for this element is sufficiently unusual to need extra specification when such occurs. The apparent major changes there are between the Norwegian and the Scottish place-name material thus prove to be relatively insignificant. To me, the continuation and the development is far more important.

Where the continuity is best explored is within the topographical relationship. Although there are individual variations in the expression of topographical relationship between Norway and Scotland, the types of specifics are, nonetheless, generally the same. Where about 25% of the Norwegian material signified a topographical relationship of one kind or another, no less than approx. 44% of the Scottish material reflects this motive. Of the material which indicates a location in relation to a named locality (sub-group I.a.i.), the Norwegian material relates to major topographical features, such as islands, fiords and watercourses. This is exactly mirrored in Scottish material, although the general percentage of this motive is only about half of that of Norway (4% vs. 7%). The same appearance of continuity is present in the topographical relation marked by relative position (sub-group I.a.iii.). In Scotland some 16% of the material reflects this naming motive, which is only slightly more popular here than was the case in the homeland (with approx. 14%). The phenomenon of marking topographical position in relation to an unnamed locality (sub-group I.a.ii.), although not unknown, did not have great relevance in the naming process in Norway. For some reason, only 3% of the entire Norwegian material is represented by this sub-group. In contrast, almost a quarter (approx. 24%) of the Scottish *bólstaðr* material features this naming motive. Although this could be seen as a change novel to the colonial environment, there is little to suggest that the greater focus on this sub-group is more than a development from a homeland model. For instance,

the type of locality referred to is almost exclusively a topographical feature; only to a very small extent is it a man-made one. This mirrors exactly the Norwegian material, however sparse that is. Instead, the greater relevance of this naming motive should rather be seen as reflecting a difference in settlement structure between Norway and Scotland. Without resorting too much to speculation, it must be considered that the settlement-framework in which *bólstaðr* was applied in the new environment cannot but have been less well-founded than that in the Norwegian homeland. In Norway, this element was employed in a settlement structure which was comparatively much older and, hence, more established than may well have been the case in the colonies. Therefore, a naming seen in relation to a prominent topographical feature would have made sense with localisation in mind. That it made sense to name a locality in connection with noticeable features may also be hinted at when taking into account the fact that about 16% of the Scottish material is named after features present at the locality (sub-group II.f.iii., see also below). This shows that the total sum of conditions present – i.e. topographical, geographical, cultural, religious, settlement-structural, as well as past experience – combine to prompt a naming accordingly. In the case of the Scottish *bólstaðr* material, a major naming motive seems to have been to establish the locality on the 'mental map' of the user.

Another area that suggests continuity, is the use of personal names and personal designations to signal some kind of an association of the locality with a person or a group of persons (group I.c.). In Norway, the utilisation of this naming motive was negligible, only about 2% of the material has been found to signal this motive. At the outset of my studies into this place-name element, it was generally assumed that personal names were rather more common in the North-Atlantic area than in Norway. However, my studies have demonstrated that this is not the case. That there are in fact not many *bólstaðr* place-names that actually do contain personal names. Instead, the specifics that were thought to be personal names have proved rather to be appellatives. In fact, no more than 4% of the entire Scottish material can be said with certainty to contain personal names. This figure is only slightly higher than the Norwegian material. Why an associative relationship was seen to be almost irrelevant as a naming motive with *bólstaðr* place-names is impossible to establish with any degree of certainty. What is evident, however, is that the motives guiding the use of this naming motive is no different in the North Atlantic colonies from in Norway.

Nevertheless, there is also a fair amount of evidence that the naming motives changed in the colonial environment. This is especially evident

within the syntactic-semantic category of *Quality* (category II). In Norway, the naming motives relating to this category were the ones most commonly used with *bólstaðr* (approx. 58%). However, the popularity of this category is problematic. The majority of Norwegian *bólstaðr* place-names describing a quality of the locality relate to the size of the locality. This is the group of earlier mentioned *\*Miklabólstaðr*-names, and since this group of place-names is somewhat problematic (as it appears to be infected by some amount of *imitative naming*), one has to be cautious not to put too much focus on the importance of the naming-motive relating to size (group II.a.). In Scotland, the size of a locality is barely indicated in 1% of the material, whereas the quality of a locality as a whole is indicated in about 40% of the Norwegian *bólstaðr* material. The naming motive which betrays the greatest degree of innovation here is the one relating to a quality present at the locality (group II.f.), which was almost absent from the Norwegian material. Part of the reason for the popularity of this naming motive should possibly be seen as an attempt to cater for a less well-established settlement structure, as the majority of specifics signalling this motive describe a feature found at the locality (sub-group II.f.iii.). By knowing what quality to look for in the landscape, the user may utilise his 'mental map' in establishing the location of the locality.

Being susceptible to change, *bólstaðr* also reflects the most important foreign cultural influence on the later Viking Age – Christianity. The religious aspect marks the greatest difference in naming between the Norwegian homeland and the colonial environments. The Norwegian *bólstaðr* place-name material only reflects Pagan Norse religious activities, whereas the Scottish and possibly also the Faroese and Icelandic *bólstaðr* material solely show Christian influence. It is most intriguing that something as deep-rooted as religion differs so much between Norway and the North Atlantic. That the Christian impact was great is witnessed by the fact that the references to Christianity are present in names relating to the administrative and institutional relationship of a locality (group I.b.), to something existing at a locality (sub-group II.f.iii.), as well as possibly with an associative relationship (group I.c.). The actual words found as specifics are ON *kirkja*, f., 'a church', ON *kross*, m., 'a cross', and possibly a byname ultimately from Gaelic *pearsa*, f., 'a parson'. The latter two examples betray a Gaelic influence, which is not unlikely, considering the proximity of Gaelic-speaking communities to the North-Atlantic colonies and the mercantile interests the Vikings had in Ireland.

While I am talking of foreign influences, it is worth noting that, apart from this religious filter, foreign traits are strangely absent from the origi-



nal *bólstaðr* material. The specific material is to all intents and purposes wholly Old Norse. This must imply that the communities which utilised this place-name element were ethnically and culturally Norse. There is no indication that *bólstaðr* ever entered into the later Gaelic and Scots communities as an active place-name-forming element, although some place-names in Shetland, Orkney and Caithness are later analogical formations, of the type the Swedish scholar Bengt Pamp referst to as an *analogical affix name-formation*.<sup>193</sup>

One point which has occasionally complicated the general analysis of the specifics in this work, as well as the odd place-name from time to time, is the question of analogy. Analogy is a difficult concept to get to grips with. This is primarily because of an unrestricted use of this term for various types of naming. I have, therefore, chosen to distinguish between different types of analogy. The greatest problem lies in establishing how analogy works, when it works and how it manifests itself. Analogy occurs when a name is coined on grounds other than purely factual ones. This means that analogy can only occur by association with another place-name or group of similar place-names as a model. Although it is fairly simple to set up rules for analogy, applying these to actual place-names is a different matter altogether. The easiest to distinguish in this material is a particular type of analogy where a generic element of a sufficiently high frequency comes to be seen as being relevant to a certain type of locality. This is the type of analogy previously referred to as *analogical affix name-formation*.<sup>194</sup> There are about twenty names of this type in Shetland, Orkney and probably also Caithness. Names of this type are fairly easy to identify, as they are usually bestowed on much humbler localities than are original *bólstaðr* place-names, as well as the fact that they are occasionally found referring to other types of localities than such as are typical for original *bólstaðr* place-names, such as mounds and even rocky cliffs.

Where this type of analogy utilises only part of a known place-name entity, a potentially more difficult type of analogy to pinpoint is one in which an entire place-name entity is used as a model on which to form new names. The analogical formations of this type may either have been bestowed on localities purely by association with another known place-name with no regard as to whether the motives guiding the choice of

193. Cf. Pamp, Bengt, 'Onomastisk Analogi', in Albøge, G. *et al.* (eds), *Norna-Rapporter* 45. *Analogi i navngivning*, (Uppsala, 1991), p. 159.

194. *Ibid.*



known place-name are similar to those present at the new locality. This type of analogy I have chosen to term *associative naming*, for the lack of a better term. Alternatively, an analogical formation may have been bestowed on a locality because this locality contains or is thought to contain aspects similar to those associated with the known place-name formation. In this case, the naming takes place on factual grounds, real or apparent. I have chosen to call this type of analogy *imitative naming*. But are these two types of analogy present in the material? In order to establish whether they are, it is important to determine how they would individually manifest themselves. Since the former kind of analogy is purely associative, its application should manifest itself in an application different from what is typical for genuine *bólstaðr* place-names, in other words an application not too dissimilar to place-names of the so-called *analogical affix name-formation* type. The latter type, on the other hand, must have some degree of factuality about its coinage. This means that analogical formations of this type will often be hard to distinguish from genuine place-name formations. This type of analogy will normally betray itself by over-frequency.

I have not been able to pinpoint with any certainty any instances of purely *associative naming*, although I suspect that the two Sutherland place-names *Scrabster* and *Ulbster* may possibly be such examples because of their uncanny resemblance to two of the more unusual Caithness place-names. However, I have no positive proof that these are in fact analogical formations – which is why I have treated them, with substantial reservations, as genuine formations. On the other hand, it is a distinct peculiarity of this place-name type to be prone to generate new place-names on an already known model, i.e. *imitative naming*. I have already touched briefly on the largest group of names which seem to feature this attribute, the Norwegian group of names of the *\*Miklabólstaðr*-type. There are no less than 47 of this type in Norway, and they constitute almost half of the Norwegian *bólstaðr* material. Their topographical characteristics are of such a character that the name bestowed on them is always fitting and suitable; the localities to which *\*Miklabólstaðrs* refer are large secondary settlements, either carved out from the primary settlement's arable infield or situated on a large arable tract up-valley from the primary settlement. In this respect, this type of place-name does not differ from other Norwegian *bólstaðr* place-names, although it is normally of a larger size than other Norwegian place-names in *bólstaðr*. To me, this can only mean that the *\*Miklabólstaðr* names are coined on factual grounds but with a name-pattern in mind. In the case of finding a suitable name for

a *bólstaðr* settlement of a considerable size, it must have been viewed by the namer that imitation rather than innovation was the better motive, hence the over-frequency of this name-type. Since the relevance of this name-type in Norway seems to be beyond doubt, it is the more intriguing that names of this type are nowhere to be found in the North Atlantic colonies! It is not that *imitative naming* did not take place there, as there is plenty of evidence to suggest that it did. Local *imitative-naming* traditions seem to have been developed early on. For instance, two so closely situated island groups as Shetland and Orkney display an interesting difference in the compounding of the common appellative ON *vatn*, n., 'water, a lake' with ON *bólstaðr*. In Shetland, *vatn* has been compounded with *bólstaðr* in the stem form (as \**Vatnbólstaðr*, now *Wadbister*); whereas in Orkney, the same compound shows *vatn* in the genitive singular (\**Vatns-/Vatzbólstaðr*, now *Wasbister*). There are plenty of other examples, but those cited above suffice to show that imitation seems to have been an almost inherent naming motive for *bólstaðr* place-names. Why this is so, I cannot say, and I doubt if it will ever be possible to answer this question. I can only demonstrate that *imitative naming* has taken place in several instances and always on factual grounds.

When comparing the distribution of *bólstaðr* with that of a traditional view of Norse expansion into the North Atlantic, it is immediately clear that the two pictures far from match each other. It is not that the distribution of *bólstaðr* falls outside the areas of Norse expansion but rather that *bólstaðr* is only found in some parts of the areas of Norse expansion, such as the Scottish Isles and Iceland, but not the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Ireland, or north-western England. Why is this? Several ideas have been voiced, ranging from differences in settlement structure<sup>195</sup> to differences in culture and ethnic background, etc.<sup>196</sup> As I see it, the reasons for the limited distribution of *bólstaðr* in comparison with the extent of Norse expansion are multiple. In this respect there are some points to bear in mind

195 Cf. Macgregor, Lindsay, 'Norse Naming Elements in Shetland and Faroe', in *Northern Studies* 23, (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 84-101.

196. Cf. e.g. Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, *Navnestudier* 25, (Copenhagen, 1985); Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, 'Scandinavian Settlement in Cumbria and Dumfriesshire: the Place-Name Evidence', in Baldwin, John R., and Whyte, Ian D. (eds), *The Scandinavians in Cumbria*, (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 65-82; Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, 'Scandinavians in Cheshire: a Reassessment of the Onomastic Evidence', in Rumble, A. R. & Mills, A. D. (eds), *Names, Places and People*, (Stamford, 1997), pp. 77-92, etc.

about *bólstaðr*. Firstly, this element was typically bestowed on secondary settlements. This means that this element would not have been among the very first to have been used during the settlement-process of a new area. Therefore, *bólstaðr* would only occur as a place-name element in areas where the settlement structure had had time to become 'built up' to accommodate secondary settlement. This means that the Scandinavian settlement must have been prolonged for this element to appear in the nomenclature. Furthermore, the cultural environment which used *bólstaðr* was typically West Scandinavian. There is no proof that this element ever became part of the Gaelic lexicon or onomasticon, or the Scots English ones, for that matter. This place-name element was not used by the East Scandinavian group of settlers, the Danes, in the British Isles or at home, either. Hence, the cultural background for the use of ON *bólstaðr* must be predominately Norse, if not wholly so. Secondly, *bólstaðr* was also typically used of settlements with a strong agricultural focus, which means that conditions for growing crops and rearing livestock had to be present, too.

From the above it is clear that a number of conditions had to be present in order for *bólstaðr* to be applied as a place-name element. If we look at the various areas which were settled by Norse people, the absence from these areas of *bólstaðr* can often be explained by the absence of one or more of the conditions needed to spur a name in *bólstaðr*. The westernmost point of Norse settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows in Canada appears to have been settled too briefly and, on top of this, the settlement area does not seem to have expanded enough to accommodate secondary settlements of the *bólstaðr*-type. At any rate, no place-names of Norse origin survive in the area. On the south-western coast of Greenland, where there were several small Norse communities from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, there do not seem to have been any place-names in *bólstaðr*, either. This is to some extent surprising, as there was certainly considerable secondary expansion taking place in these communities, and the culture was certainly entirely Norse. Instead, the lack of this place-name element here must be sought in the farming structure present. From archaeological excavations it has been established that the basis of the economy was cattle and sheep rearing, but crop production was only possible in sheltered places. Furthermore, a substantial part of the economy was also based on the export of walrus ivory and polar bear furs, etc. This means that farming in Greenland was predominantly pastoral. *Bólstaðr* settlements, whose economies were mainly based on cultivation, would have been unlikely to have been established there.

I see two reasons for the general absence of *bólstaðr* in the Faroe Islands – a temporal one or a topographical one.

The absence – or near absence – of *bólstaðr* from the Faroe Islands is somewhat enigmatic. All the conditions needed for *bólstaðr* to be applied as a settlement name seem to have been present. The Norse settlement and culture have been prolonged (the culture and language is still today wholly Scandinavian) and, although the Faroe landscape inhibits much secondary expansion, some secondary settlement has taken place on the arable infields of primary settlements. In my view, there may be two reasons for the lack, or near lack, of *bólstaðr* place-names, a temporal one or a structural one. To take the temporal argument first, my findings in Ch. 6. show that *bólstaðr*-localities are typically secondary settlements. An absence from these isles may then be explained by a delay in secondary settlement expansion to a time after ON *bólstaðr* had dropped out of the Faroese onomasticon. However, the Faroese archaeologist Arne Thorsteinsson has shown that the primary settlements, the Faroese *bygdir*, were to some extent established in the Viking Age, and the earliest secondary settlement-expansion, the *bylingur*-type settlements, developed concurrently. He says:

The farms established in the early Viking Age consisted of more than one of the present *bygdir*, but a number of the secondary *bygdir* may already have been established as tenancies inside the larger farms, and such tenancies may have formed the basis for later divisions. The establishment of *bygdir* as separate farms continued during the early Middle Ages. [...] In the High Middle Ages this phase of development seems to have stopped. There was at the same time a division of the *bygd*-farms into separate *byling*-farms, a process which started in the Viking Age.<sup>197</sup>

From Thorsteinsson's account, it is evident that there does not appear to have been a delay in the establishment of secondary settlements. Instead, there would rather seem to have been an early secondary expansion in the Faroes. On this basis, a temporal reason for the absence of *bólstaðr* from the Faroe nomenclature cannot be considered likely.

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197. Thorsteinsson, Arne, 'On the development of Faroese settlements', in Bekker-Nielsen, H., Foote, P. & Olsen, O. (eds), *Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress*, (Odense, 1981), p. 201.

Instead, the reason for the absence must lie in the geography of the islands. Although there was room for secondary expansion during the Viking Age and later, the nature of the Faroese topography itself limits the possibilities for expansion considerably. With the interior of the islands consisting almost exclusively of steep, mountainous basalt, the amount of available arable land is very limited. This means that the main settlements, the *bygdir*, are situated in the few areas where the soil layer is thick enough for agriculture. Sustainable agricultural expansion outside the *bygd*-infield is not a likely option. The soil layer outside the infield does not support any other farming economy than one relying exclusively on pasture. Therefore, the only areas suitable for secondary expansion are the infields, and that is where we find the *bylingur*-settlements. To Dr Lindsey Macgregor, the fact that the topography limits secondary expansion to one possible type means that “there was no point in adding the generic *bólstaðr* since it would serve no distinguishing function”.<sup>198</sup> ON *bólstaðr* was just one of several possible secondary settlement types, and although the type of secondary settlement in the Faroe Islands corresponds fully to what *bólstaðr* may denote, it lacks relevance because no other type of secondary settlement is possible.

I feel it is very important fully to understand the implications this interpretation involves. If Macgregor’s assumptions are correct, and I feel they are, the motives behind naming in ON *bólstaðr* (as well as all other place-name elements) are guided not only by the right conditions being present, but equally much by their relevance. In the Faroe Islands the right conditions for names in ON *bólstaðr* were certainly present, in as much as secondary expansion of a type *bólstaðr* could refer to did take place. However, owing to the fact that the possibilities for secondary expansion were limited to only the *bylingur*-type, ON *bólstaðr* was not needed as a place-name element, as there was nothing specific for it to denote.

The areas of Norse settlement in the British Isles have been the subject of much debate. Including Shetland, Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, the Hebrides and adjacent mainland, Galloway, Dumfriesshire, Man, eastern and southern Ireland and north-western England, there are vast differences between the various areas, geographically, culturally and in how long they remained Norse. This has also affected the appearance of the Scandinavian nomenclature in these areas. *Bólstaðr* is found in Shetland, Orkney,

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198. Macgregor, Lindsey, ‘Norse Naming Elements in Shetland and Faroe: A Comparative Study’, in *Northern Studies* 23, (Edinburgh, 1986), p. 97.

Caithness and the Hebrides. Furthermore, there are two *bólstaðr* place-names in Sutherland and one possible one in the Isle of Man. To return to Sutherland: In spite of its being in the heartland of Norse expansion in the British Isles, it is remarkably free from place-names in *bólstaðr*. There are only two examples, one in Dornoch Parish and the other in Clyne Parish. The reason for the general lack of this place-name element in Sutherland must be sought in its generally rugged and inhospitable terrain. There is little arable land available. There are a few areas with some farming land, such as Dornoch and Clyne, and it is telling that the only two examples of *bólstaðr* in Sutherland are found here.<sup>199</sup>

The coastal stretches of the mainland of Scotland, on the east coast from Beaully Firth to the River Oykel, on the west coast from Cape Wrath to the Mull of Kintyre and Arran are also without this place-name element. It is not that Norse settlement did not take place there, it certainly did. There are a fair number of place-names in ON *ból*, n., or ON *pollr*, m., in these regions, and the many place-names in ON *dalr*, m., 'a valley' betray Scandinavian influence but not necessarily settlement.<sup>200</sup> The landscape on the Scottish coast is little different from that found in the Hebrides, so there is nothing in the geography which would speak against the presence of place-names in *bólstaðr* there. The absence of this place-name element from these areas must be explained differently. It is known from historical sources that these areas were subjected to sporadic clashes throughout the period of Scandinavian supremacy. Many of the places in which the Scandinavians settled in this area were already settled by Gaels (and possibly also Picts in the area between the River Oykel and the Beaully Firth), so the Scandinavians were probably never in the majority there as they were in the Hebrides. The settlements to be made there would have to be established within an existing settlement structure. It is, therefore, very likely that the Scandinavian population early on fused with the existing culture, thereby cutting short the full flowering of a Norse nomenclature. It is not impossible to imagine that this could have occurred.

A similar situation is evident in Man, where there are several indications that the Scandinavian settlers early on mixed with the local Gaelic

199. I have earlier voiced my doubts about the Sutherland *bólstaðrs*, *Scrabster* and *Ulbster*. They are similar to two of the more unusual *bólstaðr* place-names, typologically speaking, in Caithness. Therefore, it must be borne in mind, that the Sutherland examples may be analogical forms.

200. Nicolaisen, W. F. H., *Scottish Place-Names*, (Batsford, 1977), pp. 94-7.

population.<sup>201</sup> Although the settlement in Isle of Man appears to have been substantial, an early assimilation with the Gaelic population present in the island at the time seems to have braked the development of a wholly Norse nomenclature, hence there is only one possible *bólstaðr* in Man, namely *Bravost* in Kirk Christ Lezayre. Furthermore, some of the Scandinavian place-name material, as well as some of the personal names found in place-names and in runic inscriptions suggest some East Scandinavian influence in Man as well.<sup>202</sup>

In Ireland, Scandinavians settled mainly in urban areas, such as Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, and Limerick, and in the hinterland of such towns. It goes without saying that a place-name element like *bólstaðr* would have made little sense in an urban environment, but it is surprising that it did not come to be used in the hinterland of the Norse towns. Again, the reason must be that the Norse settlement had to take place in settlement structures already laid out by the Irish. Furthermore, any development of independent Norse settlement there would certainly seem to have been cut short by the many attempts by the Irish to overthrow Norse urban supremacy throughout the 10<sup>th</sup> century. An additional factor may be that there seems to have been an early assimilation of the Norse with the native Irish population.

That an early assimilation took place between the Scandinavians and Gaels in the Irish Sea area is witnessed by the rise of a new ethnic group already in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, called the *Gall-Gaedhil*. The *Gall-Gaedhil* were a hybrid race of Scandinavians and Gaels, probably from either Ireland or Man, known for being a particularly fierce group. They are believed to have settled in Galloway (whose name is supposed to derive from this hybrid people) and also in Dumfriesshire. There are, however, only a few names which can be ascribed with certainty to this Norse-Gaelic group, whereas there are place-names of Scandinavian origin there which suggest that both Norwegians and Danes (reflected in place-names in *-by*) settled there.<sup>203</sup> On the other hand, the occurrence of the so-called *inversion compounds* in *Kirk-* points in the direction of an amalgamation

201. Cf. e.g. Fellows Jensen, Gillian, 'Scandinavian Settlement in the Isle of Man and North-West England: the Place-Name Evidence', in Fell, C., Foote, P., Graham-Campbell, J. & Thomson, R. (eds), *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man. Select Papers from the 9th Viking Congress, Isle of Man, 4-14 July 1981*, (London, 1983), p. 43.

202. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-50.

203. Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, 'Scandinavians in Dumfriesshire and Galloway: the Place-Name Evidence', in Oram, R. D. & Stell, G. P. (eds.), *Galloway. Land and Lordship*, (Edinburgh, 1991), pp. 77-95.



during the Viking Age and slightly later of Norse, Danish, Gaelic and Anglian people.<sup>204</sup> This testifies to a culturally mixed group of people. In such an environment the occurrence of certain place-name elements in the local onomasticon is more likely to be the result of chance than anything else. As soon as there is Norse settlement outside of a predominantly Norse culture, *bólstaðr* seems to have ceased to be used.

The same seems to have been the case in North-West England. The traditional viewpoint was that the Danes settled in the eastern and north-eastern parts of England, whereas the Norse settled in the north-western parts. Later research, however, has shown that this alleged Norse settlement in North-West England is hard to prove, and it certainly does not have any basis in documentary evidence.<sup>205</sup> Nonetheless, this region does show a good deal of Scandinavian influence in its nomenclature. The evidence deducible from this place-name material reveals that the Viking-Age settlement in North-West England had the character of multi-ethnicity. For instance, place-names in *-by* testify to a Danish or Anglo-Danish presence, whereas place-names in *-ærgi* reflect a Norse-Gaelic influence.<sup>206</sup> Gillian Fellows-Jensen, who has most recently studied this area in detail, has argued that there is little direct evidence for either Norwegian/Norse or Danish settlement in the area, but that the place-name material shows proof of settlement in the area from the Danelaw, either directly or via the Isle of Man. Further indications that there was some Norse settlement may be seen in the occurrence of two place-names in ON *-staðir*, m., namely *Croxteth* and *Toxteth*, together with two names for an assembly-site, *þingvǫllr*, m., now *Thingwall*, in Wirral in Cheshire and south-west Lancashire.<sup>207</sup> She concludes that North-West England:

would seem to have been a meeting-place and perhaps a melting-pot for West Scandinavian settlers who had come there by sea from the Scottish Islands or by land or sea from Galloway and East Scandinavian settlers who had come across the Pennines from the Danelaw. From Cumbria there would seem to have been further

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204. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-92.

205. Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, 'To Divide the Danes from the Norwegians: On Scandinavian Settlement in the British Isles', *Nomina*, 11, (1987), pp. 35-60.

206. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

207. Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, Navnestudier 25, (Copenhagen, 1985), pp. 307-21.



movement by land or sea northwards into Dumfriesshire and by sea to the Isle of Man and from there perhaps back across the Irish Sea to Wirral and south-west Lancashire.<sup>208</sup>

The Scandinavian settlement in the area seems to have been less substantial in North-West England than in many other areas of Scandinavian settlement in the British Isles and probably less prolonged.<sup>209</sup> Under all circumstances, the nomenclature of North-West England give the same general impression as that of the Irish Sea area of being heavily mixed. Here, though, the admixture is part West Scandinavian, part East Scandinavian and part Norse-Gaelic.

In conclusion, it thus appears that the existence of *bólstaðr* in a given area is the result of a number of factors, the most important being a predominately Norse culture, a suitable topography (i.e. one which has room for extensive secondary settlement), and a prolonged settlement. Many of the Norse colonies did not display one or more of these factors, so that this element did not enter into the local nomenclature. Although this element, together with ON *staðir*, m., is among the best evidence for West Scandinavian settlement,<sup>210</sup> the factors necessary for its use are so many and varied that its absence from an area does not mean that there was no West Scandinavian settlement in the said area. What the presence of *bólstaðr* in an area does show, however, is that there was a prolonged West Scandinavian settlement there and that the culture remained predominately Norse for a considerable time.

Very little emphasis has been placed on East Scandinavian OSw *bolstaper*/Sw *bolstad* in this study, as this dissemination has not been the focus of attention. However, I feel that the following outline history of this element is in order.

Being cognate to *bólstaðr*, *bolstaper* would seem to have a similar application as a place-name element in Sweden as well as Finland, with the notable exception that it could also be used in field-names – an aspect fully displayed in Finland. The field-names there must be considered to be generally younger than the settlement names. The distribution of this place-name element is very limited in Sweden. It is found only in the

208. *Ibid.*, pp. 320-1.

209. *Ibid.*, pp. 413-4.

210. Cf. Fellows-Jensen, Gillian, 'To Divide the Danes from the Norwegians: On Scandinavian Settlement in the British Isles', *Nomina*, 11, (1987), p. 56.

Uppland region of Sweden. That *bolstaper* does not seem to have been a current place-name element outside this area is evident from the fact that the Finnish distribution of this element is limited to the area immediately opposite to Uppland. The reason for the limited distribution of *bolstaper* in Finland is thus primarily onomastic dialectal variation in Sweden. This is in contrast to the use of *bólstaðr* in West Scandinavian, where this element was in general use and the reasons for its use and non-use appear to have been largely topographical and settlement structural.

*Bolstaper* displays one remarkable difference from its ON cognate, in so far as it has been productive over a much longer time-span. Of the sparse number of *bolstaper* place-names in Sweden, a fair proportion have the names of deities in their specifics, all of which deities are Pagan Norse. Furthermore, the medieval sources show a number of constructions in OSw *bolstaper* which appear to be either purely appellative constructions or epexegetic forms, rather than genuine place-names. This testifies to a prolonged onomastic and appellative use of *bolstaper* which is unknown from West Scandinavian. That *bolstaper* was an active place-name element for a considerable time is evident from its occurrence in southern Finland; an area which was not settled by Swedes until the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

I mentioned earlier in this chapter that the collection of place-names in ON *bólstaðr*/OSw *bolstaper* in this book is the most complete up to now. This does not mean, however, that 442 is the ultimate number of place-names of this type. It will probably be possible to find a few additional place-names, especially by making detailed studies in e.g. the Hebrides. Nonetheless, I am confident that any additional place-names of this type will not affect the general conclusions drawn within the framework of this work.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Late analogical formations in *-bist(er)*

### ACHAWABUSTER

Achawabuster, S, ND 26 37, Parish of Latheron, Caithness.

*Achawabuster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53).

This is a rather odd name. It is mentioned only once in 1661 and no other records of it exist. The name cannot be very old because the specific is a nearby place-name of Gaelic origin, *Achavar*. It cannot be a genuine name in ON *bólstaðr*, m., it is much too recent for that. It is rather a late analogical formation on the model of settlement names in *-bister* (Jakobsen 1928, p. 44).

### BISTER

Bister †, Parish of Rousay, Orkney.

*Bister* 1609 RMS (VII, 159).

This name is somewhat enigmatic. It is mentioned only once in the sources and does not exist today. The origin cannot be ON *bólstaðr*, m., as simplex *bólstaðr*-reflexes in Orkney do not usually have a fronted stem vowel, but rather a back vowel. The name is more likely a late analogical formation with settlement names in *-bister* as a model, and has, therefore, no etymological connection with *bólstaðr*.

*Bister* could alternatively be a scribal error. The RMS occasionally contains scribal mistakes. The following name in the register is 'Westbister' (i.e. Wasbister, Rousay).

### BLUMBISTER

Blumbister, S, HU 375 316, Burra, Parish of Lerwick, Shetland.

*Blindbust* 1648 Regtes (SA)<sup>211</sup>; *Blimbista* 1710 RegDds (SA, SC. 12/53/1, p. 381); [*bl̥m̥ɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 58).

The specific would seem ultimately to be ON *blindr*, adj., 'blind, something not clearly visible' (Stewart 1987, p. 58). The generic is possibly ON

211. This form is from the original. The version in the manuscript published by SRO in 1904 reads 'Blindbuster', and has been carelessly written down. (Information supplied by Brian Smith, Shetland Archives and John Ballantyne, Edinburgh. Personal correspondence).

*bólstaðr*, m., but the name may rather be a late analogical formation with settlement names in *-bister* as a model. It is, however, difficult to establish the exact origin of this name with so little and such late documentary evidence.

### CONGLIBIST

Conglibist, S, HY 78 55, Parish of Cross & Burness, Orkney.

*Conglabuster* 1662 Blaeu (133-4); *Conglibist* 1733 OR; [*kɔŋlɪbəst*] 1952 Marwick (p. 1).

The specific may be ON *kɔŋgull*, m., 'a cluster of berries, or similar fruit'. However, since the specific seems to refer to some boulders close by near the shore (Marwick 1952, p. 1),<sup>212</sup> a more likely origin of the specific would be Ork. *kungle*, sb., 'a big lump of a stone or rock' (itself ultimately from ON *kɔŋgull*, m., cf. Marwick 1995, p. 106). The generic has been interpreted as ON *bólstaðr*, m., by Marwick, but considering that the specific appears to be from the local Ork. dialect, rather than ON, the origin is rather more likely to be an analogical formation on the model settlement names in *-bister*.

### CROWBIST

Crowbist, R, HY 312 145, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney.

Recorded by Firth *et al.* (c. 1975 pp. 90-1). The place-name refers to a field in Biggins, in Grimeston, Harray. There is no trace of human habitation on the field today. The origin of the name is uncertain, as there are no written sources of it. The specific is probably Ork *kro*, sb., 'a pen, a yard a small enclosure (for animals or plants)' (Marwick 1995, p. 104), compounded with *bister*, on analogy with other settlement names with this final element. Why it should refer to a field here is unknown but the seeming lateness of coining would probably account for this.

### EASTABIST, ESTABUSTER

1. Eastabist, S, HY 320 232, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney.

2. Estabuster, S, HU 17 60, Papa Stour, Parish of Walls & Sandness, Shetland.

*Estabuster* 1613 RegTes (SA); *Estasetter* 1624 DOH (II, p. 28).

212. See also Gillis Kristensson, 'Konga and English place-names in Cong-', *SOÅ*, 1978, pp. 24-31.

The specific has been analysed as the superlative adjective *ýzti*, 'outermost', the weak declension of ON *ýztr*, superlative adj., (cf. Marwick 1952, p. 139; Stewart 1987, p. 57). However, owing to the apparent lateness of these names, a more likely alternative is that the names are late analogical formations with settlement names in *-bister* as a model. The specific element is Scots *east*, adv., 'east', with a connecting vowel inserted between the specific and generic, as explained by Jakobsen (1928, p. LVIII). Because of the lack of documentary evidence the exact date of coinage is indeterminable. According to Marwick (1952, p. 139), no. 1 does not appear in the rentals, which might indicate that the settlement is rather young.

#### **ESTABUSTER see s.n. EASTABIST**

#### **EVARABISTER / EVERBY**

Evarabister / Everby, HU 519 417, Bressay, Shetland.

*Evarabister* 1764 KSB (SA Ch.2/1108/1); *Everbie* 1772 KSB (SA Ch.2/1108/1); *Averabister* 1794 KSB (SA Ch.2/1108/1); *Everaby* 1803 KSB (SA Ch.2/1108/1); *Everabie* 1807 KSB (SA Ch.2/1108/1).

The specific is Scots/Shetl. *ever/over*, adj., 'upper' and the generic is *bister*, on analogy with the many settlement names with this final element. The settlement is marked as *Everby* on the Ordnance Survey Pathfinder map and *Evarabister* must be said to be a variant name of this.

The /-a-/ inserted between the specific and the generic in *Evarabister* must be seen as a connecting vowel (cf. Jakobsen 1928, p. LVIII). The settlement to which these two variant names refer is clearly marginal in comparison to the other farms in the vicinity, such as the neighbouring *Setter*.

#### **\*GELDIBIST**

\*Geldibist, R, HY 505 396, Parish of Westray, Orkney.

Lacking documentary evidence, it is difficult to determine the origin of the specific of this formally secondary name. It might be Scots *geld*, adj., 'barren, not giving milk'. The generic is probably *bist*, formed on analogy with settlement names which contain this ending. The /-i-/ probably represents a connecting vowel inserted to avoid a triconsonantal cluster.

Owing to the erosion in the area, it is no longer possible to determine where *Geldibist* was situated, the only vestige surviving of a possible settlement is the name *Point of Geldibist*.

## GRINDABISTER

Grindabister, S, HU 519 925, Yell, Shetland.

*Grindabister* 1855 Valuation Roll; [*grɪndabɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 54).

The specific is Shetl. *grind*, sb., 'a gate', because of its situation near the infield gate. The generic is an instance of the so-called 'analogical affix name-formation', whereby the element *bister* has been added on analogy with settlement names with *-bister* as final element, such as the two names in *-bister* in the tunship: *Kirkabister* and *Utrabister*. The name is late, as indicated by the settlement's not having been taxed until recently. It is, therefore, most probably not among the originally taxed settlements of the tunship.

## KAMBISTER

Kambister, S, HY 26 28, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney.

This is a late analogical formation. According to Marwick (1970, p. 57) the name is applied to a modern house. The specific is probably Scots/Ork. *kame*, 'a comb, a long narrow hill-crest'.

## LUNABISTER

Lunabister, S, HU 380 165, Dunrossness Parish, Shetland.

*Lunabister* 1627 SRO (RS.44/2 ff. 107-8), *Lunabister* 1878 OS1; [*luna-bɪst*] 1987 Stewart (p. 59).

This is also late formation. The settlement was established around 1540-60. The first reference to Lunabister is in a document from 1627:

... the litle toun and quoy callit *Lunabister* pertaining ... to the said James Neven as ane pendicle of his heretabill udallandis of Scousbruch, and quhilk wes first labourit and maureit be umquhill Adame Neven of Scouisbrucht his grandschir ... lyand besouth the dykis thairof, above the logh in the outfreddome and pasture of the said land ...<sup>213</sup>

The Adam Neven mentioned in the text died around 1560, which means that the settlement of *Lunabister* must have come into existence earlier than this date, possibly a decade or two earlier (information supplied by Brian Smith, Shetland Archives). It is only fair to assume that the naming took place around the same time. Therefore, the specific cannot be *lónar*, the geni-

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213. SRO, RS.44/2 folios 107 verso – 108 recto.

tive sg. of ON *lón*, f., 'a still part in a stream or lake', as suggested by Stewart (1987, p. 59), but is instead Shetl. *lon*, sb., 'a piece of home-pasture, close to the farm' (Jakobsen 1928, pp. 521-2), with a connecting vowel, /-a-/, inserted between the specific and the generic (Jakobsen 1928, p. LVIII).

### MAKABIST

Makabist, A, Sanday, Orkney.

Lamb (1992, p. 44) interprets this name as a compound of ON *maki*, m., 'a partner' and ON *bólstaðr*, m. Although it is very tempting to see this name as a genuine *bólstaðr*-name, it most probably is not. As Lamb himself explains, this name refers to a large mound (though not a feature of the latest OS map) and not a settlement. The shape of the mound possibly resembles a house-structure, as a result of which it has been named in *bist* on analogy with the many settlement names in Orkney. Lamb's interpretation of the specific cannot be ascertained, owing to the lack documentary evidence, so its interpretation must remain open.

### MARBISTER

Marbister, R, Parish of Deerness, Orkney.

This name is mentioned by Marwick in an unpublished collection of Deerness place-names. The name is probably not very old at all. The specific can hardly be ON *marr*, m., 'a horse', as this appellative is only used poetically in ON. It is more probably Ork. *mar*, sb., 'a whitish kind of soil found in meadows, marl' (Marwick 1995, p. 115), compounded for some reason with *bister*, which must be considered to be an analogical formation.

### NEDRABISTER

Nedrabister †, S, HU 4557 8208, Yell, Shetland.

*Nedrabister* c. 1830 SA (list of inhabitants); *Nether-a-bister* 1831 Mathewson; *Nedrabister* 1870 SA (RS.111/5 folio 57).

This place-name is late. The specific is Shetl. *nedra*, comp adj., 'lower (of two)', here referring to the situation of the settlement below the main settlement area of Setter. The generic has been formed on analogy with other Shetland place-names in *-bister*.

In the document of 1870, the name refers to what is described as a 'little house'. The name is no longer in use, and the present inhabitants have never heard of this name.<sup>214</sup>

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214. Information supplied by John Ballantyne, Edinburgh.

## NORRABISTER

Norrabister, S, HU 443 797, Yell, Shetland.

[*nɔrbɪstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

The origin may possibly be a compound of ON *norðr*, adv., 'north', and ON *bólstaðr*, m., 'a farm'. However, owing to the lack of early forms and the general insignificance of the location, it is altogether more possible that the name is an analogical formation in Shetl./Scots *north*, adv., 'north', in compounds often shortened to *nor-*, and *bister*.

## OVERBULSTER

Overbulster, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Overbulster* 1661 RMS (XI, 53).

This is a rather perplexing name. It is mentioned only once in the sources, and only relatively late. The specific is Scots *over*, adj., 'upper, higher', whereas the generic is most probably the result of an analogical formation. The /-l-/ is erroneous.

## RIGBISTER

Rigbister, R, ND 470 765, Little Skerry, Pentland Skerries, Parish of South Ronaldsay, Orkney.

In spite of its present form, this name does not originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m. It refers to a rocky ridge on a small skerry at the southernmost extreme of Orkney, the Pentland Skerries. There has never been any settlement here, which makes the appearance of this name so perplexing. A cautious interpretation could be that the generic *bister* has been applied because of the likeness of the shape of the rock with a building-structure. The specific might be ON *hryggr*, m., 'a ridge, a hill-crest', but is more likely the later Scots *rig*, sb., 'a ridge, a hill-crest'.

## \*SANDBISTER

\*Sandbister, HY 527 361, Faray, Parish of Eday, Orkney.

In the absence of early documentary evidence, it is difficult to ascertain the origin of this place-name. In its present guise, *Bight of Sandbister*, it is a formally secondary name. The element, *Sandbister*, contains either ON *sandr*, m., 'sand', or Scots *sand*, sb., of the same meaning. The generic might be ON *bólstaðr*, m., but the place-name may alternatively have been created on analogy of the many names in *bist(er)* in Orkney.

The area has suffered from severe erosion and there is no trace of the locality anymore.



## SINNABIST

Sinnabist, (S), Dunrossness Parish, Shetland.

*Sinnabister* 1829 SA (sc. 12/6/1826/40a).

Jakobsen (1936, p. 32) interprets the name as a compound of ON *sina*, f., 'withered grass' or Shetl. *sinna*, sb., 'long, old and tough grass growing among the rock on the sea-shore, long, tough grass growing in water' (Jakobsen 1928, p. 758) and ON *bust/burst*, f., 'a bristle, a roof-ridge', which in Shetl. place-names denotes a tapering rock, a steep part of coast, tapering into a point, ridge. Taking the general location into consideration, the generic interpretation is quite possible. However, this name is said to refer to a building structure there.<sup>216</sup> The actual structure is from the Bronze Age and seems to have been utilised for some activity or other at a later date, or has at least been disturbed.<sup>217</sup> Should the name refer to this structure rather than to a topographical feature, it may well be an analogical formation in *bister*.

## SUNDRABISTER

Sundrabister, S, HU 480 845, Yell, Shetland.

[*'sindrabister*] 1987 Stewart (p. 55).

Because of the lack of documentary evidence, the origin of this name is uncertain. Stewart lists it under ON *bólstaðr*, m., but his comment to the settlement is: "A lonely hill settlement in a deep valley, now waste". Topographically, the settlement situation is completely atypical. It is not situated on cultivated land, as *bólstaðr*-farms always are, but instead on peat, which is only suitable for pasture. It is more probably a late analogical formation in *bister*. The specific is Scots/Shetl. *sindry/sundry*, adv., 'sunder, separate, apart, in or to pieces',<sup>215</sup> either with the meaning lying by itself or lying in ruins.

## WESTBISTER

Westbister †, S, Shetland.

*Westbister* 1587 RMS (V, 1314); *Westbister* 1600 RMS (VI, 1038);

*Westbister* 1600 RMS (VI, 1083).

215. Robinson, Mairi (ed.), *Chambers. The concise Scots dictionary*, (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 617.

216. Cf. e.g. Ballantyne, John H., 'Willa-Mina Hoga in South Yell, Shetland', in *Northern Studies*, vol. 24, 1987, p. 36: "Sinnabister, said to be an old settlement or outset, in the Clift Hills about half a mile just west of north of the Hill of Deepdale (SA, SC. 12/6/6193) ..."

217. Information supplied by Shetland archaeologist Val Turner, personal correspondence.

This place-name is not known outside of these three interrelated documents, and the exact location is unknown. It would not appear to have been a very successful settlement – nor very old, for that matter. With its late coinage in mind, it must be an analogical formation where *bister* has been compounded with Shetl./Scots *west*, adv., ‘west’.

## Appendix 1.2. A topographical overview of late analogical place-name formations in -bister

Settlement type:		Number:	Percentage:
	A:	-	-
	B1:	-	-
	B2:	-	-
	B3:	-	-
	C:	8	100%
<b>Altitude:</b>	Highest:	100 m	
	Lowest:	5 m	
	Average:	38 m	
	Typical altitude range	10-50 m	(63% of all settlements)
<b>Distance to the sea:</b>	Greatest:	2.800 m	
	Shortest:	50 m	
	Average:	800 m	
	Typical range of distance:	100-2,000 m	(88% of all settlements)
<b>Distance to drinking water:</b>	Greatest:	500 m	
	Shortest:	50 m	
	Average:	200 m	
	Typical range of distance:	100-300 m	(88% of all settlements)
<b>Slope:</b>	Steepest:	20%	
	Gentlest:	2%	
	Average:	8%	
	Typical range of slope:	2-16%	(88% of all settlements)
<b>Soil type:</b>		<i>Nos of settlements:</i>	<i>Percentage:</i>
	Alluvium:	-	-
	Blanket peat:	3	38%
	Boulder clay:	1	12%
	Brown soil:	-	-
	Undifferentiated glacial drift:	1	12%
	Mixed soils:	3	38%
<b>Soil quality:</b>		<i>Nos of settlements:</i>	<i>Percentage:</i>
	Poor:	7	88%
	Medium:	1	12%
	Good:	-	-

## Appendix 2. Place-names ultimately of different origins

### Appendix 2.1. Norway

#### BOLLSTAD

Bollstad, S, (32V) NN 083 708, Rogne sn., Oppland fylke (Kristians Amt).

*Ballestadh* 1540 DN (II, 841); *Boldestadt* 1578; *Bollestad* 1592; *Bøllestad* 1616; *Boelstad* 1667; *Boldstad* 1723.

In spite of the resemblance of the modern form of the name to simplex names in ON *bólstaðr*, m., the documentary evidence shows that this is a place-name in ON *staðir*, pl. m., compounded with either ON *bolli*, m., 'a bun, ball', or the derived the personal name ON *Bolli*, m.

#### BOSTAD

1. Bostad, S, Ulleren sn., Hedmark fylke (Hedemarkens Amt).

[*'bo:sta*] 1900 NG (III, pp. 186-7, no. 71,19).

2. Bostad, S, Os sn., Hedmark fylke (Hedemarkens Amt).

[*'bo:sta*] 1900 NG (III, p. 420, no. 115,13).

3. Bostad, S, (32V) NR 817 328, Klæbu sn., Sør-Trøndelag fylke (Søndre Trondhjems Amt).

*Bostad* c. 1530 OEJ (61); *Bostat*, *Bogsta* c. 1540 Cap.; *Bostadt* 1559; *Bogstad* 1624; [*'bosta*] 1901 NG (XIV, p. 366, no. 12).

The specific of these names is probably the genitive sg. of the personal name, ON *Bósi*, m., and the generic is probably a name in ON *staðir*, pl. m. (Rygh, NG III, p. 420, no. 115, 13; NG IV/2, p. 307 and cp. the place-name Boserud (NG V, p. 372)), Rygh also suggests that the name may be a younger form of ON *bólstaðr*, m. However, this is not very convincing, as -l- does not usually disappear if the name is uncompounded, and certainly not if the stem vowel is long, as here.<sup>218</sup> The only possibility for this name to be from ON *bólstaðr* could be that the -l- has been lost on analogy with compounded *bolstad*-names, a development which is otherwise unattested.

218. The only simplex *bolstad*-name which has lost the [-l-], Bolstad, Oppstryn sokn, Sogn og Fjordane fylke, ([*'bosta*]), features a short stem vowel, as is normal for most *bolstad*-names. This makes Rygh's suggestion highly unlikely.

The pronunciation of no. 3 is different from that of nos 1 and 2 in having a short stem vowel, rather than a long one. Therefore, it is uncertain whether this name shares the same origin as the other Bostad names above. Nonetheless, it is certain that the origin is not ON *bólstaðr*, m., as the documentary evidence does not in any instance record an otherwise obligatory /-l-/.

### VEBENSTAD

Vebeustad, S, (32V) MQ 28 55 877, Averøy sn., Møre og Romsdal fylke (Romsdal Amt).

*Vibenstad* c. 1520 NRJ (II, 67); *Webenstad* 1559; *Wepensta* 1590; *Webenstad* 1643; *Webenstad* 1667; *Wæbenstad* 1723; [*ve'bænnsta*] 1908 NG (XIII, p. 332, no. 67); [*'vebbænsta*] 1989 Stemshaug (MoM 1989, p. 56).

There are various suggestions about this name. K. Rygh (NG XIII, p. 332, no. 67) is of the opinion that the specific is *Vébjarnar*, genitive sg. of the ON personal name *Vébjörn*, m., compounded with ON *staðir*, m., 'a farm'. Stemshaug (1989, pp. 56-71), on the other hand, is of the opinion that the name is a compound of ON *vé*, n., 'a holy site where sacrifice takes place' and ON *bólstaðr*, m.

In the opinion of Stemshaug, the NG pronunciation, with its medial stress pattern,<sup>219</sup> is developed from ON *bólstaðr* in the following way: ON [-l-] > [-n-], and ON [-o-] has developed to [-æ-] on analogy with *Vebbestad* and *Hoppestad*, in Gjerpen sn., Telemark fylke (see above). Although both these changes are possible, as Stemshaug shows, he has overlooked the fact that neither change has been documented in any other *bólstaðr*-name, in Norway or elsewhere. He has also chosen to disregard the fact that the alleged change, ON [-l-] > [-n-], is not documented at all in Averøy sn. Rare instances of *bólstaðr*-compounds do exist with the stress located on the first part of the generic element, as allegedly

219. According to Stemshaug, name compounds in Sunnmøre and Nordfjord (the southern part of Møre and Romsdal, that is, the area south of this name) with a generic element consisting of two or more syllables will typically develop the main stress on the first syllable of the generic element. Since the stress in Vebeustad is pronounced on the first syllable today, NG's phonetic rendering of Vebeustad represents a transition in main stress from the last syllable to initial stress.

here.<sup>220</sup> The few examples found, however, show typical initial stress sound changes. This means that main stress on the generic element is not original for *bólstaðr*-names. Hence, they cannot be taken as proof of an origin in ON *bólstaðr*, m.

If we turn to the documentary evidence and compare this with that for *Vebbestad*, above, there is one instance where the *Vebbestad* forms match those of *Veбенstad* here, that is the 1661 form. This Stemshaug takes as proof that these two names had similar phonetic developments. What he disregards here is the fact that the 1661 form for *Vebbestad* is no less than a century or more later than the corresponding forms for *Veбенstad*. In fact the inserted /-n-/ in the 1661 *Vebbestad* form, cannot under any circumstances be linked to the change ON [-l-] > [-n-], but is obviously a much later scribal insertion. Hence, Stemshaug's strongest piece of documentary evidence is null and void.

There is very little which suggest that *Veбенstad* is an original *bólstaðr*-name; the two names just happen to have superficially similar modern expressions.

## Appendix 2.2. Scotland

### ARBOLL

Arboll, S, NH 878 820, Parish of Tain, Ross-shire.

*Arkboll* 1464 RMS (II, 801); *Arkboll* 1506 RMS (II, 2991); *Arboll* 1507 RMS (II, 3123); *Arboll* 1514 RMS (III, 21); *Argbole* 1531 RMS (III, 1019); *Argbole* 1531 RSS (II, 905); *Arkboll* 1534 RMS (III, 1430); *Arboll* 1543 RMS (III, 3003); *Arkboll* 1546 RMS (IV, 17); *Arkboll* 1546 RSS (III, 1941); *Arkboll* 1547 RMS (IV, 120); *Arkboll* 1547 RSS (III, 2339); *Arboll* 1554 RSS (IV, 2474); *Arkboll* 1556 RMS (IV, 1094); *Arkboll* 1563 RMS (IV, 1452); *Arkboll* 1569 RMS (IV, 1879); *Arkboll* 1569 RSS (VI, 721); *Arkboll* 1579 RMS (IV, 2851); *Arboll* 1582 RSS (VIII, 846); *Arkboll* 1584 RSS (VIII, 1978); *Arkboll* 1602 RMS (VI, 1379); *Arkboll* 1606 Retours (Ros., 80); *Arkboill* 1608 RMS (VI, 2096); *Arkboll* 1609 RMS (VII, 40); *Arkboill* 1612 RMS (VII, 695); *Arkboill* 1622 RMS (VIII, 299); *Arkboll* 1629 RMS (IX, 926); *Arkboll* 1644 RMS (IX, 1551); *Arkboll* 1649 RMS (IX, 2027).

220. *Bólstaðr*-names with the primary stress not on the initial element are: *Myklebust*, Sande sokn, Møre og Romsdal fylke; *Myklebust*, Ørsta sokn, Møre og Romsdal fylke; *Myklebust*, Bremanger sokn, Sogn og Fjordane fylke.

Watson (1904, p. 47) suggests that this name is a compound of ON *qrk*, f., 'an ark, a coffin, a ship' and ON *ból*, n. The suggestion as to specific is etymologically satisfactory but does not seem to fit Scandinavian names very well, typologically speaking.

It is conceivable that the origin of this name is Gaelic instead. However, this possibility is not very plausible either. The reason being that the most likely Gaelic words to form the specific are equally semantically improbable. The phonetically closest words in Gaelic are either *àirc*, f., 'an ark, a chest', or *àrc*, f., 'a cork-tree' (which would most probably not grow in northern Scotland). The origin of this name is uncertain and must, therefore, remain open.

### ARNABOLL, ARNIPOL

1. Arnaboll, S, NC 459 589, Sutherland, Scotland, *Arnobill* 1530 RSS (II, 624); *Ardebole* 1551 RSS (IV, 1371); *Arnobill* 1551 RSS (IV, 1375); *Ardoboll* 1555 RSS (IV, 3060); *Ardeboll* 1565 RMS (IV, 1635); *Arnbold* 1576 RSS (VII, 776); *Ardnaboll* 1583 RMS (V, 580); *Ardnaboll* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170); *Arnabold* 1608 RMS (VI, 2089); *Ardnaboll* 1616 Retours (Sut., 4); *Arnabol* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Arnaboll* 1662 Blaeu (113-4); *Ardnaboill* 1662 RMS (XI, 200); *Arnaboll* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Ardiboll* 1755 Roy (35-2).

2. Arnipol, S, NM 742 839, Parish of Arisaig & Moidart, Inverness-shire. *Arnapoule* 1610 RMS (VII, 264); *Arnapoule* 1610 RMS (VII, 344); *Arnapoll* 1627 Retours (Inv., 47); *Arnapoull* 1634 RMS (IX, 7); *Arnapeull* 1776 RMS (XI, 1105).

The specific is either the ON personal name *Arni*, m., (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 47-8) or *arna*, the genitive pl. of ON *qrn*, m., 'an eagle' The generic is most likely ON *ból*, n., 'a farm, a settlement', also for no. 2, as the source forms in /-ou-/ , /-eu-/ seem to suggest a long vowel, rather than a short, as in ON *pollr*, m., 'a pool, a small rounded bay', which is, formally, an alternative.

No. 1 shows an unusual alternation between /-rn-/ , /-rd-/ and /-rdn-/ , which seems puzzling at first glance. The alternating forms should probably be seen as an attempt at etymologising a name of un-Gaelic appearance. Therefore, by replacing the original nasal with a dental or by inserting a dental into the consonant cluster, the name could attain at least a semi-Gaelic appearance, namely *Àrd-eboll* or *Àrd-na-boll*. Gaelic *àrd*, adj. means 'high, lofty', whereas Gaelic *na* is the genitive sg. form, nominative or dative plural of the feminine definite article. The specific ele-

ment (i.e. the second part of the name) would not mean anything in Gaelic but the generic element (the first part) is enough to make it feel Gaelic.

#### **ARNIPOL see s.n. ARNABOLL**

#### **ASSAPOL**

Assapol, S, NM 403 210, Parish of Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon, Mull, Argyllshire.

*Assabold* 1588 RMS (V, 1491); *Assobald* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Assabald* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67); *Assobill* 1674 Retours (Arg., 82); *Assobill* 1687 Retours (Arg., 93).

The specific is ON *áss*, m., 'a ridge, a hill-crest'. The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'. Cox (1994, p. 53) has alternatively interpreted the name as containing the genitive sg. of ON *haf*, n., 'a sea' and ON *pollr*, m., 'a pond, a small rounded bay'. This latter interpretation must be considered unlikely, as initial ON *h-* is not normally lost in Hebridean place-names (see e.g. s.n. *Habost*).

#### **BARRAPOLL**

Barrapoll, S, NL 954 430, Island of Tiree, Argyllshire.

*Barrepoill* 1638 RMS (IX, 828); *Barrabol* 1662 Blaeu (123-5); *Barrepoill* 1674 Retours (Arg., 82); *Barrabol* c. 1734 van Keulen.

The specific is probably ON *barr*, n., 'barley'. The generic is ON *ból*, n., but might be ON *pollr*, m., 'a pond, a small rounded bay'.

#### **BAYBLE, KILPHOBULL, PAIBLE**

1. Bayble, S, NB 526 316, Stornoway Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

2. Kilphobull, S, Parish of Kilninian & Kilmore, Mull, Argyllshire.

*Kilphobull* 1588 RMS (V, 1491); *Kilphobull* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Kilhoubil* 1662 Blaeu (117-8).

3. Paible, S, NG 031 993, Isle of Harris, Inverness-shire.

*Paible* 1805 Bald(1).

4. Paible, S, NF 735 676, North Uist, Inverness-shire.

*Paible* 1505 RMS (II, 2873).

Capt. Thomas (1876, p. 491) and Oftedal (1954, p. 396) interpret the names as being identical with Icel. *Papýli* (< ON *Papa-býli*, 'settlement of the Papae/priests'). No. 2 is a formally secondary name, compounded of the generic, Gaelic *cill*, f., 'a cell, a church', and the specific, a place-name \**Papýli*.



### BHASAPOLL

Bhasapoll, S, NL 977 476, Island of Tiree, Argyllshire.

*Bassapoill* 1638 RMS (IX, 828); *Basbol* 1662 Blaeu (123-5); [*Loch Bassabil* 1776 Mackenzie].

The specific is the ON personal name *Bassi*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 114-5). The generic is ON *ból*, n.

### BIRCEAPOL

Birceapol, S, NL 965 447, Island of Tiree, Argyllshire.

The specific is ON *birki*, n., 'a birchwood', and the generic is either ON *ból*, n., 'a farm', or ON *pollr*, m., 'a pond, a small rounded bay'.

### BISTE

Biste, S, Island of Coll, Argyllshire.

Johnston (1995, p. 121) interprets this name as a simplex ON *bólstaðr*, m., 'a large secondary settlement'. The usual modern reflex of a simplex *bólstaðr*-name in the Hebrides, however, is *Bosta*, so this interpretation seems unacceptable. The lack of early forms makes a safe analysis untenable. Therefore, the safest approach is to assume that the origin is probably not ON *bólstaðr*, m., and otherwise leave the interpretation open.

### BORROBOL

Borrobol, NC 865 265, S, Parish of Kildonan, Sutherland.

*Borubol* 1332 DKS (pp. 159-61, no. 119); *Borrowbul* 1370 DKS (pp. 105-8, no. 45); *Borroboll*, *Borryboll* 1563 RSS (V, 1463); *Borriboll* 1564 RSS (V, 1704); *Borroboll* 1566 RSS (V, 2718).

The specific is the genitive sg. of ON *borg*, f., 'a fortification' (cf. Watson 1904, p. 265, for parallel developments of ON *borgar*- > *borro*-). The generic is ON *ból*, n.

### BOWSTER-A-CHOIN

Bowster-a-choin, R, HY 29 22, Parish of Birsay & Harray, Orkney.

[*'bɔuster a tʃən*] 1970 Marwick (p. 88).

Marwick (1970, p. 88) suggests that the *Bowster* element derives from ON *bólstaðr*, m., 'a farm'. However, since ON [o:] does not develop into Ork. [ɔu], this is rather unlikely. An origin in ON *bústaðr*, m., is not a possibility either, as ON [u:] does not become [ɔu] in Orkney. The origin is

more likely ON *setr/sætr*, n., 'a shieling', with a now obscure specific (with the stem vowel in ON [au]).

The name is a field-name and does not seem to have been in use in any other sense, and this makes the *setr/sætr*, n., origin more plausible.

### \*BUSHTA

\*Bushta, W, ND 194 725, Parish of Dunnet, Caithness.

*Loch Busta* 1750 Roy; *L. Busta* 1807 Arrowsmith; *L. Busta* 1831 Thomson; *L. Busta* 1832 Thomson; [lɔχ ə 'bufta] 1985 Waugh (p. 273).

According to Waugh (1985, 273) the lake, *Loch of Bushta*, may refer to a formally primary name in ON *bólstaðr*, m., 'large secondary farm', or ON *bústaðr*, m., 'small farm, hut'. In the lack of very early forms, either may be possible from a documentary and phonetic point of view (ON [o:] as well as ON [u:] may become Cai. [u] (Waugh 1985, Appendix)).

The loch itself is situated in an environment which can hardly have been utilised for other than shieling activities. There is no trace of any permanent settlement or agricultural activity near the loch but there are numerous signs of human activity in the area – tracks as well as a chapel site. From a topographical point of view, then, the latter suggestion must be seen as the most likely. This is a formally secondary name, the settlement the specific refers to is otherwise unknown.

### BUST

Bust, Parish of Thurso, Caithness.

Bust 1661 RMS (XI, 53).

This name is found only once in the sources and it is not entirely clear what it refers to. It may either derive ultimately from ON *bust/burst*, f., 'a bristle, the roof-ridge of a house, a tapering rock, etc.' (Jakobsen 1936, p. 32), ON *bústaðr*, m., 'a shieling, a small hut' or ON *bólstaðr*, m., 'a farm'. Judging from the written form, the first suggestion seems tentatively a likely source.

### CADBOLL

Cadboll, S, NH 878 776, Parish of Tain, Ross-shire.

*Catboll* 1556 RMS (IV, 1132); *Catboll* 1592 RMS (V, 2222); *Catboll* 1603 RMS (VI, 1467); *Catboll* 1604 RMS (VI, 1545); *Catboll* 1606 RMS (VI, 1709); *Catboll* 1606 RMS (VI, 1751); *Catboll* 1610 RMS (VII, 409); *Catboll* 1611 RMS (VII, 499); *Wester Catboll* 1617 RMS (VII, 1703); *Catboill* 1623 RMS (VIII, 481); *Wester Catboill* 1647 RMS (IX, 1752);

*Wester Cadboll* 1648 RMS (IX, 1976); *Catboll* 1649 Retours (Ros., 100); *Catebale* 1662 Blaeu (107-8); *Catboll* 1664 RMS (XI, 558).

The specific is ON *kattr*, m., 'a cat' (cf. Watson 1904, p. 40). The generic is ON *ból*, n.

### \*CHUILAPUILL

\*Chuilapuill, W, NB 485 439, Parish of Barvas, Lewis, Ross-shire.

The origin of this name is obscure, owing to a lack of source forms. Judging from the modern form, the generic might be ON *pollr*, m., 'a pool, a small rounded bay', especially considering that the name is now only found as a constituent of the formally secondary *Loch Chuilapuill*.

### COLABOLL

Colaboll, S, NC 560 102, Sutherland.

Because of the lack of documentary evidence, the origin of this name is uncertain. The generic, however, seems to be ON *ból*, n.

### CORSAPOL, CROISPOL, CROSSAPOL, CROSSAPOLL

1. Corsapol, S, NR 299 665, Parish of Kilchoman, Islay, Argyllshire.  
*Croseboll*, *Croseboll* 1614 RMS (VII, 1137); *Crossopolle* 1615 Retours (Arg., 16); *Crosboll* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1146); *Crossobell* 1662 Retours (Arg., 68); *Crossobell* 1665 RMS (XI, 778); *Korsopolis* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Corsapool* 1751 McDougall.

2. Croispol, W, NC 390 680, Parish of Durness, Sutherland.

3. Crossapol, S, NL 995 446, Island of Tiree, Argyllshire.  
*Crosboll* 1496 RMS (II, 2329); *Crossipoll* 1540 RMS (III, 2065); *Crossipole* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Crosinpolle* 1630 RMS (VIII, 1610); *Crossiboill* 1638 RMS (IX, 828).

4. Crossapol, S, NM 388 529, Parish of Kilninian & Kilmore, Mull, Argyllshire.

*Crosopollie* 1542 RMS (III, 2835); *Crossipoill* 1603 Retours (Arg., 7); *Crossopole* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Crossopolle* 1630 RMS (VIII, 1610); *Crossoboill* 1638 RMS (IX, 828); *Crossiboill* 1642 RMS (IX, 1080); *Crossopoll* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67); *Crossiboill* 1674 Retours (Arg., 82).

5. Crossapoll, S, NM 127 531, Island of Coll, Argyllshire.  
*Crocepolo* 1528 RMS (III, 712); *Crocepolo* 1542 RMS (III, 2787); *Grocepolo* 1558 RSS (V, 389); *Crocepolo* 1617 RMS (VII, 1652); *Crocepolo* 1642 Retours (Arg., 59); *Crocepolo*, *Crocpoldo* 1643 RMS (IX, 1310); *Crocepolo* 1656 RMS (X, 531); *Corsepoldo* 1674 Retours (Arg., 81).

The specific is most likely ON *kross*, m., 'a cross'. The generic appears to be ON *ból*, n., 'a farm', in spite of some alternation of /b/ and /p/ in the source forms.

**CROISPOL** see s.n. **CORSAPOL**

**CROSSAPOL** see s.n. **CORSAPOL**

**CROSSAPOLL** see s.n. **CORSAPOL**

### **CULBO**

Culbo, S, NH 637 605, Parish of Resolis, Cromarty, Ross-shire.

*Eister Culbo* 1557 RMS (IV, 1225); *Westir Culboill* 1567 RSS (VI, 47); *Wester Culboll*, *Westir Culbole* 1595 RMS (VI, 265); *Wester Culbo* 1608 RMS (VI, 2069); *Waster Culboll* 1610 RMS (VII, 298); *Eister Culbo* 1622 RMS (VIII, 356); *Wester Culboll* 1623 RMS (VIII, 410); *Culbo* 1641 RMS (IX, 1033); *West Culbo* 1658 RMS (X, 665); *Culbo* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Easter Culbo* 1666 RMS (XI, 937).

Watson (1904, p. 121) has interpreted the specific as ON *kúla*, f., 'a ball, a lump, a knob'. The generic is ON *ból*, n.

### **CULLIPOOL**

Cullipool, S, NM 739 130, Parish of Kilinver & Kilmelfort, Argyllshire.

Because of the lack of documentary sources the origin of this name is uncertain. The generic appears to be ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'. The specific is uncertain.

### **DUIBLE**

Duible, S, NC 924 198, Sutherland.

*Doypull* 1527 RMS (III, 475); *Dwebull* 1545 RMS (III, 3165); *Dwebull* 1579 RSS (VII, 2166); *Dwyboill* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170); *Dwyboll* 1616 Retours (Sut., 4); *Duyboill* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1941); *Durgboill* 1662 RMS (XI, 200); *Duybol* 1662 Blaeu (107-8); *Duybol* 1750 Dorret.

The specific of this name is not readily identifiable; the generic seems to be ON *ból*, n.

### **ELDRABLE**

Eldrable, S, NC 985 182, Parish of Clyne, Sutherland.

*Altirebell* 1548 RMS (IV, 241); *Altireboll* 1563 RSS (V, 1463); *Altirboll* 1564 RSS (V, 1704); *Altireboll* 1566 RSS (V, 2718); *Altirboll* 1577 RSS (VII, 1055).

The specific appears to be ON *altari*, m., 'an altar'. The generic is most likely ON *ból*, n.

### EMBO

Embo, S, NH 817 928, Parish of Embo, Sutherland.

*Ethenboll* c. 1222 DKS (pp. 14-23, no. 9); *Embo* 1654 RMS (X, 285); *Enbo* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Embo* 1662 Blaeu (107-8); *Embo* 1755 Roy (36-1).

The exact origin of this name is uncertain. The specific might represent a metathesised form of ON *Edna*, f. (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 208). The generic is ON *ból*, n.

### ERIBOLL

Eriboll, S, NC 43 56, Parish of Dornoch, Sutherland.

*Davach-Erebull* 1500 RMS (II, 2506); *Ireboll* 1530 RSS (II, 624); *Davach-Erebull* 1539 RMS (III, 2048); *Daache-Irrebole* 1551 RSS (IV, 1371); *Erbole* 1551 RSS (IV, 1375); *Daache-Irrebole* 1555 RSS (IV, 3060); *Dawach-Erebull* 1565 RMS (IV, 1635); *Dawach Ereboll* 1566 RSS (V, 3141); *Errebold* 1576 RSS (VII, 776); *Dawach-Ereboll* 1583 RMS (V, 580); *Dowache-Ereboill* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170); *Erebold* 1608 RMS (VI, 2089); *Davach Erreboll* 1616 Retours (Sut., 4); *Erebill* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Erebill* 1662 Blaeu (113-4); *Erebill* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Eriboll* 1755 Roy (35-2); *Eribol* 1804 Heather; *Eriboll* 1886 Admiralty.

To judge from the second source form, the specific seems to be ON *Írar*, m. pl., 'Irish people', but the genitive sg. of ON *eyrr*, f., 'a gravelly bank' has also been suggested (Johnston 1934, p. 174). The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

### GAILIABLE

Gailiable, S, NC 947 184, Parish of Clyne, Sutherland.

*Galleboll* 1548 RMS (IV, 241); *Gyllyboll* 1563 RSS (V, 1463); *Galliboll* 1564 RSS (V, 1704); *Gailzeboll* 1566 RSS (V, 2718); *Galleboill* 1577 RSS (VII, 1055).

The specific may be the ON genitive sg. of ON *geil*, f., 'a narrow valley, a ravine'. The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

### GREBOILL

Greboill †, S, Sutherland.

*Greboill* 1662 RMS (XI, 200).

The site is unknown and is only mentioned once in the sources. As a

result of the sparse documentary evidence for this name, the origin is doubtful. Only the generic can, with some certainty, be ascribed to ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

### **GRIPASPUL**

Gripaspul, S, NB 226 144, Lochs Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

The specific is obscure. The generic is probably ON *pollr*, m., 'a pool, a small rounded bay'. The settlement to which this name refers is situated by a small bay in Loch Seaforth.

### **GRISHIPOL**

Grishipol, S, NM 191 593, Island of Coll, Argyllshire.

*Grisbol* 1662 Blaeu (123-5); *Grisabil* 1804 Heather; *Grisbol* c.1734 van Keulen; *Grishabil* 1776 Mackenzie; *Grissipol* 1794 Huddart.

The specific is ON *gríss*, m., 'a pig'. The generic is ON *ból*, n.

### **HARRAPOOL**

Harrapool, S, NG 655 230, Parish of Snizort, Skye, Inverness-shire.

*Harpool* 1662 Blaeu (127-9).

The specific is uncertain. It might be ON *harra/herra*, m., 'a lord, a master', but is probably rather ON *hárr*, adj., 'grey'. The generic is ON *ból*, n.

### **HEGGABALD**

Heggabald, S, c. NM 70 47, Parish of Morvern, Argyllshire.

*Heggabald* 1638 RMS (IX, 828); *Heggabald* 1674 Retours (Arg., 82).

The specific is obscure. The generic seems to be ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

### **HEYLIPOLL**

Heylipoll, S, NL 976 433, Island of Tiree, Argyllshire.

*Huillepoill* 1638 RMS (IX, 828); [*L. Hylebol* 1662 Blaeu (123-5)].

Johnston (1995, 118) would have this name to be a compound of ON *helgi/heilagr*, adj., 'holy' and ON *bólstaðr*, m. However, there is nothing in the documentary sources which suggests that the generic would originate from ON *bólstaðr*, m. On the contrary, the origin of the generic should probably be sought in Gaelic *poll*, m., 'a pit, a pond'. The specific is obscure.

### **KILPHOBULL see s.n. BAYBLE**

## KIRKAPOL, KIRKIBOLL

1. Kirkapol, S, NM 042 475, Island of Tiree, Argyllshire.

*Kirkebold* 1588 RMS (V, 1491); *Kirkcapole* 1599 RMS (VI, 891); *Kirkapoll* 1602 RMS (VI, 1377); *Kirkbold* 1617 RMS (VII, 1628); *Kirkapoll* 1631 Retours (Arg., 40); *Kirkabol* 1662 Blaeu (117-8); *Kirkabol* 1662 Blaeu (123-5); *Kirkbold* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67); *Kirkapeill* 1674 Retours (Arg., 82); *Kirkapoill* 1687 Retours (Arg., 93); *Kirkapoll* 1697 Retours (Arg., 96); *Kirkabul* 1776 Mackenzie; *Kirkabul* 1794 Huddart; *Kirkabul* 1804 Heather.

2. Kirkiboll, S, NC 591 565, Sutherland.

*Kirkeboll* 1530 RSS (II, 624); *Kirkebole* 1551 RSS (IV, 1375); *Kirkebole* 1555 RSS (IV, 3060); *Kirkeboll* 1565 RMS (IV, 1635); *Kirkeboill* 1566 RSS (V, 3141); *Kirkebold* 1576 RSS (VII, 776); *Kirkboill* 1583 RMS (V, 580); *Kirkboill* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170); *Kirkebold* 1608 RMS (VI, 2089); *Keirkboll* 1616 Retours (Sut., 4); *Kirkaboll* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); [*Avon Kerkiboll* 1662 Blaeu (97-8)]; *Kirkaboll* 1662 Blaeu (113-4); *Kirkboill* 1662 RMS (XI, 200).

The specific is the genitive sg. of ON *kirkja*, f., 'a church'. The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

## KIRKIBOLL see s.n. KIRKAPOL

## LEARABLE

Learable, S, NC 896 234, Parish of Kildonan, Sutherland.

*Leryboll* 1548 RMS (IV, 241); *Lyriboll* 1564 RSS (V, 1704); *Lereboll* 1566 RSS (V, 2718); *Lereboll* 1577 RSS (VII, 1055).

The specific is ON *leira*, f., 'clay'. The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

## LESSANKYBOLL

Lessankyboll, S, Parish of Kilmore & Kilbride, Argyllshire.

*Leffenkyboll* 1574 RMS (IV, 2194); *Leffenkyboll* 1592 RMS (V, 2005); *Leffenkyboll* 1614 RMS (VII, 1129); *Leffenkyboill* 1634 RMS (IX, 132); *Leffenkyboll* 1663 Retours (Arg., 74); *Lessankyboll* 1664 RMS (XI, 613); *Lesenkyboll* 1687 Retours (Arg., 92).

This is a somewhat enigmatic name. The name seems to be a compound of an obscure element, *Lessan* and ON *\*Kirkjuból*, n., itself a compound of the gen. sg. of ON *kirkja*, f., 'a church' and ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'. *\*Kirkjuból*, n., has subsequently been shortened to *Kyboll*. The /-ff-/ in some of the entries are obviously erroneous.

## LUMBISTER

Lumbister, S, HU 485 962, Yell, Shetland.

*Limbista* 1558-9 SheDoc2 (116); *Lumbista* 1569 (1624) SheDoc2 (178); *Lumbista* 1571? (1624) SheDoc2 (188); *Lumbister* 1605 SheDoc (409); *Lumbustaw* 1610 SheDoc (503); *Lumbusta* 1626 DOH (II, p. 81); *Lumbesta* 1672 Retours (O&S, 106); *Lumbista* 1698 Retours (O&S, 149); [*lambəstər*] 1987 Stewart (p. 253).

This name is somewhat enigmatic. It would be tempting to view this name as a compound of ON *lundr*, m., 'a grove' and ON *bólstaðr*, m. Trees are known to have grown throughout Shetland in ancient times but are generally thought to have died out since the Viking Age.

However, there are a number of problems with this interpretation. Firstly, there is no trace of tree growth in the vicinity of *Lumbister* today. The area does not seem to have been a likely place for trees either (the settlement is situated on a small green patch of grassland in the centre of a moor). Furthermore, the documentary evidence sheds some doubt as to the origin of the name. Apart from the 1605 source, none of the forms show *-(bi)ster* forms, but rather *-(bi)sta*, *-(bu)staw* and *-(be)sta* forms. These forms rather point to an origin in ON *staðir*, m., 'a farm'. The *-b-* + vowel must therefore belong to the specific. Stewart (1987, p. 253) did interpret this name as a *staðir*-name. However, his analysis of the specific as the genitive pl. of ON *lamb*, n., 'a lamb', cannot be sustained, as ON *[-a-]* is normally retained in the Shetl. dialect. A more likely possibility would be ON *\*lumpr*, m., 'a lump, stump, block'.<sup>221</sup> What ON *\*lumpr*, m., refers to is not entirely certain but it could be a reference to some peculiarly shaped headlands on the shore of the southern *Loch of Lumbister* situated some 100 m north of *Lumbister*.

The present-day pronunciation of *Lumbister* ([*lambəstər*]) is the result of analogy with other Shetland place-names in *-bister*, through which it has acquired its unetymological final *[-ər]*. The medial *[-ə-]* is a connecting vowel originally inserted to avoid the clash of the consonant group *[-mp]* of the specific with the initial *[s-]* of the generic (cf. principle described in Jakobsen 1928, p. LVIII). ON *[-p-]* has become Shetl. *[-b-]*, either because of its situation between two voiced phonemes *[-m-]* and *[-ə-]* or by force of analogy with *[b-]* in *bólstaðr* (Jakobsen 1928, p. LV).

221. ON *lumpr*, m., as well as its Germanic cognates are not attested in the early languages and usually only occur relatively late. It is not attested in ON until 1316, where it appears as a byname (cf. Lind 1920-1, p. 248). The late appearance of this appellative (and its cognates) is probably owing to the fact that the concept to which this appellative referred was not suitable subject for chroniclers.



### **MEOBLE**

Meoble, S, NM 795 878, Parish of Arisaig & Moidart, Inverness-shire.  
*Mevybill* 1610 RMS (VII, 264); *Merybill* 1667 RMS (XI, 1105).

The specific is obscure. The generic is probably ON *ból*, n.

### **MURTOST**

Murtost, S, Island of Coll, Argyllshire.

Johnston (1995, p. 121) interpreted this name as a *bólstaðr*-name, but owing to the lack of documentary sources, this claim is impossible to test. Under all circumstances, it does not look very typical of a *bólstaðr*-name. The missing [b] may be a casualty of a triconsonantal cluster. However, this loss of the final consonant in a consonant cluster of three is not usual. Instead, it is usually the middle consonant which is lost (Seip 1955, pp. 155 and 273). This alone makes Johnston's claim rather unlikely. I have, therefore, chosen to list this name here. As to the origin of this name, with the slim material available, it can only be said to be obscure.

### **\*NOUSTAPAL**

\*Noustapal, R, NF 829 210, South Uist, Inverness-shire.

This is a formally secondary place-name, *Glen Noustapal*, in which *Noustapal* forms the specific of a place-name in Gaelic *gleann*, 'a valley'. This place-name is itself a compound, of which the specific may be ON *naust*, n., 'a boat-shed', and the generic ON *pollr*, m., 'a pond, a small rounded bay'. This name has alternatively been analysed as a metathesised form of a \**Gnúpsdal*, a compound consisting of the genitive sg. of ON *gnúpr*, m., 'a peak, a summit' and ON *dalr*, m., 'a valley' (cf. e.g. Cox 1994, p. 53). This interpretation, however, seems somewhat untenable.

### **PAIBLE see s.n. BAYBLE**

### **PLOCRAPOOL**

Plocrapool, S, NG 178 935, Isle of Harris, Inverness-shire.

*Plocrapull*, [*Loch Procapull* 1805 Bald(1)]; [*Loch Plocrapull* 1832 Thomson]; [*L. Phocrapol* 1886 Admiralty]; [*p{ɔ:grəbɔ}*] c. 1930 Duncan.

The name is obscure, probably of Gaelic origin.

### **REGEBOLL**

Regeboll, S, Sutherland.

*Regeboll* 1551 RSS (II, 1372); *Rigebolle* 1551 RSS (II, 1375); *Regeboll* 1555 RSS (IV, 3060); *Regeboill* 1565 RMS (IV, 1669); *Rigabod*

1576 RSS (VII, 776); *Regeboll* 1581 RMS (V, 277); *Regeboill* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170); *Ragaboill* 1605 Retours (Sut., 2); *Regiboll* 1608 RMS (VI, 2155); *Rigaboll* 1608 RMS (VI, 2089); *Regeboll* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1045).

The specific may be ON *riga*, f., 'a bend, a ripple'. The generic is ON *ból* n.

### RESIPOLE

Resipole, S, NM 721 642, Ardnamurchan, Argyllshire.

*Reischepoll* 1610 RMS (VII, 272).

The origin of this name is difficult to ascertain. The generic might either be ON *pollr*, m., 'a pond, a small rounded bay' or Gaelic *poll*, m., 'a pit, pond'.

### RYISSABULL

Ryissabull, S, NM 61 46, Parish of Morvern, Argyllshire.

*Ryissabull* 1545 RMS (III, 3085).

The specific is obscure. The generic might be ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

### SCOBULL

Scobull, S, NM 466 270, Parish of Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon, Mull, Argyllshire.

*Scoabyll* 1494 RMS (II, 2200); *Scoabill* 1538 RMS (III, 1745); *Straboll* 1542 RSS (II, 4732); *Scoaboll* 1612 RMS (VII, 663); *Straboill* 1625 RMS (VIII, 815); *Skobol* 1662 Blaeu (123-5); *Straboill* 1663 Retours (Arg., 73); *Scabill*, *Scabil* 1776 Mackenzie; *Scabil* 1794 Huddart; *Scabil* 1804 Heather.

The specific may be a form of ON *skógr*, m., 'a forest'. The generic is either ON *ból*, n., 'a farm' or rather ON *bæli*, n., 'a farm, a settlement'.

### SKELBO

Skelbo, S, NH 788 951, Parish of Embo, Sutherland.

*Scelbol* c. 1211 DKS (pp. 7-9, no. 5); *Scelebol* c. 1212 DKS (pp. 9-11, no. 6); *Scelbotil* c. 1214 DKS (pp. 11-2, no. 7); *Scelleboll* c. 1222 DKS (pp. 14-23, no. 9); *Skellebolle* 1235 DKS (pp. 27-8, no. 11); *Skelebow* 1510 RSS (I, 2023); *Skelbo* 1535 RMS (III, 1496); *Skelbo* 1563 RSS (V, 1382); *Skelbo*, *Eister Skelbo* 1564 RSS (V, 1704); *Skelbo*, *Eister Skelbo* 1566 RSS (V, 2718); *Skelbo* 1608 RMS (VI, 2102); *Skelbo* 1616 Retours (Sut., 3); *Skelbo* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Skelbe* 1662 Blaeu (107-8); *Skelbo* 1755 Roy (36-1).

The specific is probably ON *skel*, f., 'a clam-shell'. The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

## SKIBO

Skibo, S, NH 735 891, Parish of Dornoch, Sutherland.

*Scitheboll* c. 1222 DKS (pp. 14-23, no. 9); *Schythebolle* 1275 DKS (pp. 43-9, no. 5); *Skeboll* 1478 RMS (II, 1404); *Skebo* 1548 RSS (III, 2824); *Skebo* 1563 RSS (V, 1463); *Skebo* 1565 RMS (IV, 1669); *Skebo* 1578 RMS (IV, 2782); *Skebo* 1580 RMS (IV, 2965); *Skebo* 1581 RMS (V, 277); *Skebo* 1583 RMS (V, 561); *Skebo* 1601 RMS (VI, 1170); *Skibo* 1605 Retours (Sut., 2); *Skebo, Skibo* 1608 RMS (VI, 2155); *Skebo* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1045); *Skibo, Ovir Skibo* 1662 Blaeu (107-8); *Skibo* 1726 Macfarlane (II, 545); *Skeebo* 1755 Roy (36-1).

This name has undergone drastic reductions. There have been several suggestions as to the origins of the specific. It has been interpreted as an ON personal name, *Skíði*, m. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 916-7). Johnson (1934, p. 296), on the other hand, sees the specific as possibly containing ON *skeið*, f., 'a long-ship'. Judging from the earliest references, Watson would seem to be correct, although ON *skíð*, n., 'a billet of wood' is also a strong possibility (cf. SSNY, p. 37). The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

## STOBISTER

Stobister, S, HU 518 377, Bressay, Shetland.

[*stobister*], [*staupster*] 1987 Stewart (p. 58).

Owing to the lack of early forms, the interpretation of this name is difficult. Stewart (1987, p. 58) suggests that the specific may be ON *staup*, n., 'a hole' from the old pronunciation [*staupstər*]. The generic is also problematic to interpret. Of the two pronunciations available, each points in a different direction. The most modern, [*stobister*], suggests ON *ból-staðr*, m., or Shetl. *bister*, sb., but this pronunciation is most likely spelling-based (whence the difference between this one and the earlier pronunciation). If the earlier pronunciation is the most original, the [-p-] would seem to belong to the specific, as suggested by Stewart. Should this be the case, the generic is from ON *setr*, n., 'a hut, a shieling' (cf. Stewart 1987, p. 58).

## SUNIPOL

Sunipol, S, NM 371 539, Parish of Kilninian & Kilmore, Mull, Argyllshire.

*Soneboll* 1496 RMS (II, 2329); *Suneboll* 1510 RMS (II, 3440); *Sonepoill* 1540 RMS (III, 2065); *Sonepoill* 1603 Retours (Arg., 7); *Sonepoile* 1615 Retours (Arg., 16); *Sonypoill* 1616 RMS (VII, 1514); *Sonepoll* 1617 RMS

(VII, 1628); *Sonypoill* 1627 RMS (VIII, 1183); *Sonepillie* 1630 RMS (VIII, 1610); *Swinboill* 1638 RMS (IX, 828); *Senepoil* 1662 Retours (Arg., 67); *Sonypoill* 1664 Retours (Arg., 76); *Sunniboill* 1674 Retours (Arg., 81).

The specific may be ON *sunnar*, adv., 'southerly'. The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

### TAVOOL HOUSE

Tavool House, S, NM 437 274, Parish of Kilninian & Kilmore, Mull, Argyllshire.

*Tayobill* 1494 RMS (II, 2200); *Tayobill* 1538 RMS (III, 1745); *Tayoboll* 1542 RSS (II, 4732); *Cayaboll* 1612 RMS (VII, 663); *Cayoboll* 1615 Retours (Arg., 15); *Tayaboill* 1625 RMS (VIII, 815); *Tabol* 1662 Blaeu (123-5); *Tayabill* 1663 Retours (Arg., 73); *Lapil*, *Tapil* 1776 Mackenzie; *Lapil* 1804 Heather.

The sources are highly ambiguous as to an indication of the origin of the specific and do not offer any solution. The generic, however, is most likely ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

### THUSTER

Thuster, S, ND 290 518, Parish of Wick, Caithness.

*Fureseter* 1541 RMS (III, 2450); *Thuresetter* 1549 OPS; *Fursetter* 1549 RSS (IV, 333); *Thursater* 1574 RSS (VI, 2536); *Thurissetter* 1606 RMS (VI, 1758); *Thurister* 1616 RMS (VII, 1508); *Thurissetter* 1622 RMS (VIII, 251); *Thurister* 1632 RMS (VIII, 1917); *Thurrisetter*, *Thurristeter* 1661 RMS (XI, 53); *Tuster* 1662 Blaeu (115-6); [*pastar*] 1985 Waugh (p. 416).

Waugh (1985, pp. 416-7) has analysed the specific as being the genitive sg. of the ON personal name *Púrídr*, f. (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 1226-9). She analysed the generic as either ON *setr*, n., 'shieling, small farm', or ON *bólstaðr*, m. However, she seems to have mixed up some forms with *Tister* in the Parish of Bower (see above). From the list of forms displayed here, there seems to be little doubt that the origin is ON *setr*, n., 'shieling, a small farm'.

### TORBOL, TORROBLE

1. Torbol, S, NH 752 989, Parish of Rogart, Sutherland.

*Thorboille*, *Thorbolle* 1363 RMS (I, 132); *Thurboll*, *Thorboll*, *Litil Thorboll* 1444 DKS (pp. 230-4, no. 187); *Thurball* 1510 RMS (II, 3405); *Torbollis* 1563 RSS (V, 1382); *Litil Torbo*, *Mekle Torbo* 1563 RSS (V,

1463); *Litill Torboll*, *Mekill Torboll* 1566 RSS (V, 2718); *Torboll Lytill*, *Torboll Meikill* 1616 Retours (Sut., 3); *Torboll* 1656 Retours (Sut., 6); *Torboll* 1662 Blaeu (107-8); *Little Torbo* 1755 Roy (36-1); *Muckle Torbo* 1755 Roy (36-1).

2. Torroble, S, NC 591 045, Parish of Lairg, Sutherland.

*Thoreboll* c. 1222 DKS (pp. 14-23, no. 9); *Thoreboll*, *Thorebolle* 1275 DKS (pp. 43-9, no. 5); *Torrobull* 1563 RSS (V, 1463); *Torroboll* 1564 RSS (V, 1704); *Torroboll* 1566 RSS (V, 2718); *Torryboll* 1577 RSS (VII, 1055); *Torrebol* 1662 Blaeu (107-8).

Johnson (1934, p. 312) interprets the specific as the ON name of the heathen god *Pórr*, m. This interpretation, however, is hard to ascribe to these names, as there is no genitive marker to suggest such a derivation. It is rather more likely that the specific is ON *þorn*, m., 'a thorn, a thorn-bush'. ON [n] is often dropped between two consonants (Seip 1955, pp. 164, 278). The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

## **TORROBLE** see s.n. **TORBOL**

### **\*ULAPOLL**

\*Ulapoll, W, NB 330 220, Lochs Parish, Lewis, Ross-shire.

*Loch Ullaball* 1755 Roy (35-2); [u:ləpəl] c. 1930 Duncan.

This place-name forms part of the formally secondary place-name of *Loch Ulapoll*. The generic of *Ulapoll* is most likely ON *pollr*, m., 'a pool, a small rounded bay'. The specific is uncertain, but may be the ON pl. of ON *ulfr*, m., 'a wolf'.

### **ULLAPOOL**

Ullapool, S, NH 128 941, Parish of Lochbroom, Ross-shire.

*Ullebell* 1592 RMS (V, 2024); *Ullabill* 1596 RMS (VI, 465); *Ullabill* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Ullobil* 1662 Blaeu (117-8); *Ullabill* c. 1734 van Keulen; *Ullabill* 1755 Roy (33-2); *Ulapule* 1776 Mackenzie; *Ulapule* 1794 Huddart; *Ullapool* 1804 Heather; *Ullapool* 1886 Admiralty.

The specific has been interpreted as an ON personal name, either *Ulli*, m., or *Ólafr*, m. (cf. Watson 1904, p. 254; Johnston 1934, p. 318), but neither of these suggestions is very good: the former name being almost unattested (cf. Lind 1905-15, col. 1056), and the latter should have a genitive -s in order to be considered (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols 810-4). Another, more likely, possibility could be the genitive pl. of ON *ulfr*, m., 'a wolf'. The generic appears to be *bæli*, n., 'a farm'.

## UNAPOOL

Unapool, S, NC 235 330, Sutherland.

*Unnaboll* 1662 Blaeu (97-8); *Unabil* 1794 Huddart; *Unabil* 1804 Heather.

The specific may be the ON personal name *Uni*, m. Another possibility is ON *undir*, adv., 'under, below'. The assimilation of [nd] to [nn] is well attested in Norway (Seip 1955, pp. 172, 284). Judging from the earliest source, the latter suggestion seems the most plausible. The generic is ON *ból*, n., 'a farm'.

## Appendix 2.3. Iceland

### BÓLASTAÐIR

Bólstaðir, A, Hálsaveit, Borgarfjarðarsýsla.

*Bolstad* 1723 IK (pl. 48).

The settlement is now a ruin. The form on Arason's map seems to suggest a simplex ON *bólstaðr*, m. However, the present-day form rather implies that the name is a compound with ON *staðir*, m. pl. as generic and probably the genitive pl. of ON *ból*, n., as the specific. Therefore, the 1723 form must be considered to be a misrepresentation.

### BREIÐABÓL

Breiðaból, Svalbarðsströnd, Suður-þingeyjarsýsla.

*Breidaboolstad*, *Breidabool* 1732 IK (pl. 56).

The present farm of *Breiðaból* is found under two forms in Knoff's map of 1732. In the index, it is clearly listed as *Breidaboolstad*, whereas on the map itself it is found as *Breidabool*. Since there are two names listed in *-staður* previously in the index, we are probably looking at a misrepresentation of the name. However, an origin in ON *bólstaðr* and a subsequent reduction of the generic element parallel to that of *Hqrðuból* and *Kirkjuból* cannot be totally disproved – although this is improbable. This place-name is most likely a compound of ON *breiðr*, adj., 'broad, wide', with ON *ból*, n., 'a farm' (cf. Jónsson, *Bæjarnafn á Íslandi*, p. 425).

## Appendix 2.4. Faroe Islands

### BÓLSTAÐUR

Bólstaður, R, (29V) PJ 239 751, Heimarahlv, Nólsoy, Streymoyar Sýsla.

[*Boulstatang* 1795 Borns Søkort]; *Baulsta* 1895 Gsk (Opmálingskort),

*Boulsta* 1895 Gsk (Navneliste); *Bólstað* 1899 Gsk. (D 10. (1:20000)).

This is a rather puzzling name. Formally, it looks as if it is a straightforward simplex ON *bólstaðr*, m. However, when the extra-linguistic parameters are consulted it becomes clear that the situation is not typical at all. There is no trace whatsoever of any human activity in the vicinity, bar a V-shaped dyke/wall. The local interpretation of the name is 'a resting-place for cattle' – hence the dyke. It seems that this name is a late coinage of Faroese *ból*, n., 'a place to lie down, outfield pen' and Faroese *staður* m., 'a place'.<sup>222</sup>

The earliest forms in /-ou-/ or /-au-/ are orthographic renderings of the local Faroese diphthongisation of ON [-o:-] to Faroese [-ou-] or [-au-] (the latter is the local Nólsoy dialect). If the name had any substantial antiquity, it would have been fair to have assumed a reduction in quantity of the stem vowel before a consonant cluster, rather than a diphthongisation as here. The retained long vowel quantity in this name may be seen as proof that the local users have identified the first syllable of the name with the Faroese appellative *ból*, n., and have not seen the name as structurally one unit.

222. That the site situation and the typical interpretation of *bólstaður* did not seem to correspond with each other is evident from a list of names with interpretations. This list was made in connection with the 1895 survey of the Faroes. Both forms *Boulstatang* and *Boulsta* (subsequently erased?) are listed – the former as a tongue of land and the latter as a hill-top. The comments on the names are as follows: "Origin? Judging from the sound it could be *ból* (pronounced *boul*) and *stad*, i.e. *Bolsted*. But the meaning?" ("Opr.? Efter *Lyden* kunde det maaske være *ból* (udt. *boul*) og *stad*, altsaa – *Bolsted*. Men *Meningen*?"). A footnote gives one interpretation of *boul*. It says: "*boul* (phonetic), = enclosure where sheep are driven" ("*boul*, (fonetisk) = Indh. hvor Faar drives hen").

## Dansk resumé

Hovedformålet med denne bog har været at belyse en række forhold omkring det gammelnorske (gno.) stednavneelement *bólstaðr*, m. Det geografiske område som undersøgelsen dækker over, strækker sig fra Norge over Skotland og Færøerne til Island.

Navne på *-bólstaðr* udviklede sig fra at være en lokal vestsandinavisk stednavnetype til at blive det mest udbredte gno. stednavneelement i de nordatlantiske vikingetidskolonier. I dette arbejde har hovedvægten været lagt på det skotske og norske materiale, men også en række svenske og finske navne på fornsvensk (fsv.) *-bolstaper* er blevet indsamlet og underkastet relevante analyser for at opnå et så komplet billede af stednavnetypen som muligt.

Den samlede mængde stednavne som er blevet behandlet i dette værk, omfatter i alt 551 navne som alle har været sat i forbindelse med gno. *bólstaðr*/fsv. *bolstaper*, eller som, selvom de ikke tidligere har været behandlet i den videnskabelige litteratur, giver indtryk af at være navne på *-bólstaðr*. Langt størstedelen af stednavnene må antages at stamme fra vikingetiden, men en del er yngre. Hvert enkelt stednavn er blevet underkastet en grundig etymologisk analyse. Denne analyse er primært blevet foretaget på baggrund af de indsamlede kildeformer, mens udtaleformerne kun i mindre grad har dannet grundlag for analyserne. For at kunne afklare om den onomastiske funktion af *bólstaðr* var den samme i koloniområderne som i oprindelseslandet, er en topografisk analyse blevet anvendt på en del af materialet. Den samlede mængde onomastiske og ekstra-onomastiske informationer giver en idé om hvilke motiver der lå til grund for bosætternes brug af denne stednavnetype, og om hvilke typer af lokaliteter som kunne navngives med et *bólstaðr*-navn.

Kapitel 1 er en kort introduktion til værket. Her udstikkes bogens disposition, og de bagvedliggende motiver og afgrænsningsproblemer diskuteres. En række teoretiske og metodiske problemstillinger undersøges, først og fremmest afgrænsninger af termene *proprium* (name) og *appellativ* (appellative). Onomastikkens forskningshistorie bliver også kort diskuteret, ikke mindst i forhold til opstillingen af de relevante analytiske redskaber inden for navneforskningen, og der gives en kort redegørelse for de ekstra-onomastiske redskaber som er anvendt i afhandlingen. Endelig afsluttes kapitlet med et historisk grundrids af den periode hvor *bólstaðr* har været et aktivt stednavneelement.

I kapitel 2 undersøges oprindelsen af gno. *bólstaðr* og dets forekomst i kilderne. Det vises at stednavneelementet er en sammensætning af gno.



*ból*, n., og gno. *staðr*, m., og at hvert led har en række betydninger knyttet til sig. Det betyder at den oprindelige betydning af gno. *bólstaðr* er vanskelig at fastslå. Dog gættes der i denne sammenhæng forsigtigt på en oprindelig betydning i retning af 'stedet med den beboede og dyrkede jord, gård'. I modsætning hertil er den appellativiske brug mere ligetil. Det skyldes især det faktum at de kilder hvori *bólstaðr* optræder, er middelalderlige og derfor ret sene. Dertil kommer at appellativet *bólstaðr* optræder i en tekstlig sammenhæng der gør det muligt at udtale sig mere præcist om betydningen. Den sædvanlige appellativiske betydning af ordet *bólstaðr* er 'gård', men ordet kan dog alternativt kan betyde 'jord hørende under en gård'.

I kapitel 3 behandles de 108 norske navne på *-bólstaðr*. Kapitlet indledes med en kort geologisk beskrivelse af Norge samt en oversigt over stednavnetypens udbredelse i landet. Den største koncentration af navne på *-bólstaðr* findes i det vestlige Norge i fylkerne Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane samt Møre og Romsdal. I disse fylker er der overleveret mere end 55 navne, dvs. over halvdelen af det samlede norske *bólstaðr*-navnemateriale. En gennemgang af den tidligere norske udforskning af dette stednavneelement er også at finde i dette kapitel. Derefter følger en diskussion af den fonetiske udvikling af *bólstaðr* som stednavneelement i Norge. Heri beskrives dels hvordan *bólstaðr* i stednavne lydligt udvikler sig forskelligt, alt efter om det optræder usammensat eller som sidste del af en sammensætning, dels opridses de vigtigste dialektale udviklinger af stednavneelementet. For det norske materiales vedkommende slås det fast at det fonetisk set nært beslægtede stednavneelement gno. *bústaðr* kan forveksles med *bólstaðr*. I visse tilfælde er det endog umuligt at skelne mellem navne på *-bólstaðr* og *-bústaðr*. Derefter behandles hvert navn for sig i alfabetisk rækkefølge. Hvis det enkelte navn tidligere er blevet tolket på tilfredsstillende måde, henvises der til de relevante værker. Navne hvis etymologi er omstridt eller dunkel, gives derimod en mere grundig gennemgang. Kapitlet slutter med en generel datering af stednavnetypen. Da *bólstaðr* også har været anvendt i vikingetidskolonierne, men på samme tid hverken synes at være sammensat med kristent ord- og navnestof eller at indeholde sekundære *-s*-genitivsformer, kan det sandsynliggøres at *bólstaðr* må have været et aktivt stednavneelement fra det 8.-11. århundrede, dog især nok i det 9.-10. århundrede.

I kapitel 4 beskrives det skotske *bólstaðr*-materiale på 240 navne (inklusive det ene mulige eksempel fra Isle of Man). Også dette kapitel indledes med en geografisk og geologisk beskrivelse af de områder hvor stednavneelementet forekommer. Derpå følger en beskrivelse af selve ud-

bredelsen af navne på *-bólstaðr*. Den største koncentration findes på Orkney, men også på Shetland, i Caithness og på Hebriderne findes der et betydeligt antal af navne på *-bólstaðr*. Der gøres desuden opmærksom på at stednavne på *-bol(l)* og *-pol(l)* generelt ikke anses for at være oprindelige stednavnedannelser på *-bólstaðr*. Dernæst beskrives kort den tidligere forskning på området. Eftersom gno. *bólstaðr* i skotsk navneforskning er et ofte anvendt element til belysning af den nordiske bosættelse i Skotland, er kun de vigtigste bidrag medtaget. Inkluderet er også et afsnit der omhandler de forskellige fonetiske udviklinger af stednavneelementet som på baggrund af den komplekse lingvistiske situation i Skotland har resulteret i meget varierende moderne skriveformer i forskellige områder, f.eks. *Bousta*, *Bosta*, *-bist(er)*, *-(b)ster*, *-bost*, *-bolls* samt *-bus*. Som for det norske stednavnematerialer vedkommende gælder det for det skotske stednavnestof at det fonetisk set nært beslægtede stednavneelement, gno. *bústaðr*, meget vel kan forveksles med *bólstaðr*. En række faktorer (især af ekstralingvistisk art) betyder dog at denne forvekslingsmulighed reelt synes at være minimal. I det efterfølgende afsnit tolkes hvert af de skotske navne i alfabetisk rækkefølge. Princippet er det samme som anført i kapitel 4. Eftersom en stor del af dette navnemateriale ikke tidligere er blevet udgivet, er der i forhold til det foregående kapitel lagt vægt på at medtage så mange kildeformer som muligt for hvert enkelt navn. Til sidst afrundes kapitlet med en samlet datering af det skotske *bólstaðr*-materiale. Ved hjælp af diverse lingvistiske og ekstralingvistiske kriterier anslås det hvornår stednavneelementet var aktivt i forskellige dele af Skotland. På Shetland, Orkney og Hebriderne måske fra slutningen af det 9. århundrede og i Caithness og Sutherland fra det 10. århundrede. Hvornår stednavneelementet ophørte med at være aktivt, er mindre sikkert, men det anslås at ske omkring midten af det 13. århundrede. Under alle omstændigheder synes *bólstaðr* kun at have været anvendt i en rent nordisk sammenhæng, hvorved *bólstaðr*'s aktivitetsperiode må antages at være ophørt samtidig med at skandinavisk fortrænges af det gæliske sprog. I områder som har været uberørt af gælisk-sproget indflydelse kan navne på *-bólstaðr* i teorien have været givet senere end det 13. århundrede, omend det navnetypologisk set ikke anses for sandsynligt.

I kapitel 5 gennemgås de islandske og færøske navne som (muligvis) indeholder elementet *bólstaðr*. Kapitlet indledes med en kort introduktion hvor områdets geografi, den fysiske distribution af *bólstaðr* samt den tidligere forskning på området kort præsenteres. Derefter følger selve tolkningen af hvert enkelt af de 20 islandske navne, efterfulgt af de to mulige færøske eksempler. Det viser sig at det islandske materiale næsten ude-

lukkende består af usammensatte navne (4) samt navne af typen *Breiða-bólstaðr* (14). De medtagne færøske navne anses for at være højst usikre eksempler på *-bólstaðr*. Og sluttelig gives der et bud på en datering af stednavne på *-bólstaðr* i Island. Lingvistisk set er det meget svært at datere stednavne på *-bólstaðr* i Island. Dateringen af dette materiale er derfor især baseret på et kildemæssigt og historisk grundlag, og den synes at pege på en periode fra begyndelsen af det 10. århundrede til slutningen af det 11. århundrede som det tidsrum hvor størstedelen af bebyggelserne med et navn på *-bólstaðr* må være blevet anlagt og antagelig også navngivet. På grund af det ringe antal af mulige færøske stednavne på *-bólstaðr* og den usikkerhed som de er omgærdet med, er der ikke blevet forsøg på at datere navnematerialet her.

Kapitel 6 berører det topografiske studium af bebyggelser med navne på *-bólstaðr*. Den analytiske model der anvendes her, er struktureret efter en model anvendt af historikeren David Olson som inddeler bebyggelser i primære, sekundære og perifære enheder. Principperne bag denne model diskuteres i begyndelsen af kapitlet. Optimalt set burde alle bebyggelser på *-bólstaðr* undersøges ud fra denne model – forudsat at deres beliggenhed var kendt. Desværre har stednavneelementets vidtspredte udbredelse umuliggjort dette. I stedet er to områder med et begrænset, men repræsentativt, antal *bólstaðr*-stednavne blevet udvalgt. De to norske fylker *Sogn og Fjordane* samt *Møre og Romsdal* er blevet udpeget til at repræsentere den oprindelige bosættelsessituation, mens *Shetlandsøerne* er valgt til illustration af bosættelsessituationen i Nordatlanten. Hvert område indeholder omtrent det samme antal *bólstaðr* stednavne (47 mod 40). Derudover er der 8 unge analogiske stednavne på *-bister* på Shetland. Denne gruppe af stednavne er blevet undersøgt separat (se Appendix 1) for at afklare om disse topografisk set skiller sig ud fra de oprindelige *bólstaðr*-stednavne. Den topografiske undersøgelse viser at *bólstaðr*-navnene i Norge såvel som på Shetland blev givet til sekundære bosættelser der var opstået som følge af en opsplitelse af en større bosættelsesenhed i mindre portioner. Det økonomiske grundlag for bebyggelserne ser ud til hovedsagelig at have været landbrug, især dyrkning af jorden. Der er visse variationer i typen af sekundær bebyggelse mellem de studerede områder, men materialet tillader ingen konklusioner af hvorvidt variationerne afspejler en reel betydningsudvikling eller snarere forskelle i de topografiske forhold. De 8 analogiske stednavne på *-bister* viser sig udelukkende at være perifære bosættelser.

I kapitel 7 er der givet en samlet syntaktisk-semantisk analyse af det vestnordiske stednavnemateriale indeholdende *bólstaðr* i Norge og Skot-

land. Hvor den ældre stednavneforskning for det meste har stillet sig tilfreds med en leksikalsk analyse af et stednavn – dvs. en fastlæggelse af hvilket ordstof der indgår i navnet og i hvilken betydning – har denne bog anlagt en syntaktisk-semantisk analyse som kan afsløre hvilke motiver der ligger bag navngivningen. De forled der er fremledt på baggrund af den etymologiske fortolkning af hvert enkelt stednavn i kapitel 3-5, er søgt analyseret ud fra en syntaktisk-semantisk synsvinkel i dette kapitel. Den tilgrundliggende syntaktisk-semantiske analysemodel, som er udformet af den finske stednavneforsker Kurt Zilliacus, beskrives og diskuteres i begyndelsen af kapitlet. Analysemodellen er konstrueret med det formål at analysere betydningen af et stednavn ud fra navngiverens synsvinkel. Hvor *bólstaðr* – i kraft af at være hovedleddet – almindeligvis bevarer sin normale klassificerende betydning, vil ethvert ord det sammensættes med i et stednavn kunne sige noget om den lokalitet som stednavnet refererer til. Ved at undersøge forledsinventaret i stednavne på *-bólstaðr* kan man sige noget om navngivningsmotiverne bag brugen af dette stednavneelement. Den navnesemantiske analysemodel har dermed til formål at undersøge den samlede konnotative betydning af et stednavn. Denne betydning kan afkodes dels på baggrund af en grundig etymologisk tolkning af hvert enkelt stednavn (som foretaget i underkapitlerne 3.3, 4.3, 5.2 og 5.3), dels ved en evaluering af det samlede deskriptive indhold af hele stednavnet. Den navnesemantiske klassifikationsmodel der er anvendt i denne bog, er baseret på Zilliacus' oprindelige analysemodel, men tilpasset ældre navnestof. Modellen inddeler navnestoffet i tre hovedkategorier: Relation (Relationship), Kvalitet (Quality) og Anvendelse (Usage), og i de to første kategorier er igen inddelt i en række underkategorier. Af de 108 norske navne på *-bólstaðr* indgår de 91 i den navnesemantiske analyse.

Et problem med det norske materiale er en overfrekvens af stednavne af typen *\*Helgabólstaðr* og *\*Miklabólstaðr*. Det forsøges afklaret hvad denne overfrekvens kan skyldes. Det hævdes at overfrekvensen til dels må skyldes forekomsten af mønsternavngivning (imitative naming), men da der fra et topografisk synspunkt ikke kan spores noget denotationsskifte i typen *\*Helgabólstaðr* og *\*Miklabólstaðr* i forhold til de øvrige navne, antages det at de overfrekvente navne er dannet på faktisk basis. Denne antagelse finder støtte i det faktum at mønsternavngivning i mindre målestok også kan spores i det skotske og islandske *bólstaðr* materiale, men i andre typer sammensætninger.

Navnesemantisk set beskriver over halvdelen (58%) af det norske stednavnestof på *-bólstaðr* en kvalitet ved den lokalitet navnet henviser til, hvorimod kun knap en tredjedel (29%) af materialet beskriver lokalitetens

relation i forhold til noget eksternt. Kun i 13% af navnestoffet henvises der til lokalitetens anvendelse. Den høje grad af kvalitetsangivelse samt anvendelsesangivelsen i det norske stednavnestof må for en stor dels vedkommende tilskrives den kraftige mønsternavngivning. Samme møsternavngivning er ikke til stede i det skotske materiale (201 af 240 navne) hvor størstedelen (59%) af det analyserede navnestof i stedet beskriver den navnebærende lokalitets relation i forhold til noget eksternt. Resten af materialet (40%) beskriver en kvalitet ved lokaliteten. Selve lokalitetens anvendelse kan muligvis have været relevant at beskrive i ét tilfælde, dvs. i under 1% af navnestoffet. I det skotske materiale er der ydermere flere lokalt afgrænsede tegn på begyndende møsternavngivning. Størst udbredelse har stednavne af typen *\*Kirkjubólstaðr* og *\*Breiðabólstaðr*. Sidstnævnte møsternavnetype har også i det islandske materiale meget stor udbredelse. Her udgør det næsten 90% af alle sammensætninger. Af denne grund er der ikke foretaget en syntaktisk-semantisk analyse af det islandske materiale, ligesom det færøske materiale, pga. det ringe antal af mulige eksempler, heller ikke er underkastet denne analyse.

Kapitel 8 omhandler det tilsvarende østskandinaviske stednavneelement fsv. *bolstaper*. I modsætning til det vestskindinaviske *bólstaðr*'s vide udbredelse over hele Norge samt det nordatlantiske område findes navne på *-bolstaper/-bolstad* næsten udelukkende i et smalt bælte dækkende et område fra Mälaren i Sverige til de sydligste og vestligste dele af Finland. På en række områder adskiller de østskandinaviske stednavne på *bolstaper/bolstad* sig fra gno. *bólstaðr*, men de er medtaget for at opnå et så afrundet billede af stednavneelementet som muligt. Som *bólstaðr* er fsv. *bolstaper* en sammensætning af fsv. *bol*, n., og fsv. *staper*, m., og hvert led har en række betydninger knyttet til sig. Det betyder at den oprindelige betydning af *bolstaper* er vanskelig at fastslå præcist. Dog gættes der i denne sammenhæng forsigtigt på en oprindelig betydning i retning af 'stedet med en gård og dens omkringliggende jord'. I modsætning til dette er den appellativiske brug i kilderne mere ligetil. Årsagen er især det faktum at de kilder hvori *bolstaper* optræder, er middelalderlige og derfor ret sene. Dertil kommer at *bolstaper* som appellativ optræder i en tekstlig sammenhæng der gør det muligt at udtale sig mere præcist om betydningen. Den hyppigst forekommende betydning er 'gård', alternativt 'jord hørende under en gård'. Generelt har østskandinaviske *bolstaper/bolstad* appellativisk set været aktivt meget længere end vestskindinaviske *bólstaðr*. Helt op i det 19. århundrede kan man finde eksempler på sv. *-bolstad* anvendt i tekstuel sammenhæng. Ikke mindre end 41 konstruktioner indeholdende *bolstaper* er at finde i diverse svenske middelalder-

lige kildesamlinger, men det hævdes at mange af disse ikke er at betragte som genuine stednavnekonstruktioner. Nogle er i stedet enten kildeepeksegetiske former (9) eller appellativiske konstruktioner (10) af den ene eller anden slags. Dermed indsnævres antallet af genuine svenske eksempler på stednavne indeholdende *bolstaper* til 22 navne, som er belagt i middelalderen (3 usammensatte og 19 sammensatte navne); langt de fleste af de sammensatte stednavne, ca. 80%, betegner den navnebærende lokalitets relation i forhold til noget eksternt. *Bolstaper* denoterer i Sverige hyppigst bebyggelser, men det findes også anvendt om jordarealer. Ligesom det var tilfældet med gno. *bólstaðr* er stednavne på *-bolstaper/-bolstad* mere talrige i koloniel sammenhæng. Hvor der i Sverige kan påvises 22 stednavne på fsv. *-bolstaper*, er tallet for Finlands vedkommende 49 navne. I modsætning til Sverige, hvor stednavnetypen normalt har bebyggelsesdenotation, har over halvdelen af de finske navne arealdenotation. Af de 22 navne med bebyggelsesdenotation er de 17 sammensatte navne. Af dem beskriver kun 2 navne (12%) den lokalitetens relation i forhold til noget eksternt. Resten af de sammensatte navne (88%) beskriver en kvalitet ved den navnebærende lokalitet. I forhold til det tilsvarende svenske materiale virker de finske navne på *-bolstaper/-bolstad* med bebyggelsesdenotation generelt en smule yngre, men er som helhed ældre i forhold til de finske eksempler der denoterer jordarealer. Af gruppen med arealdenotation er der 27 hvoraf 13 er usammensatte og 14 er sammensatte. Af de sammensatte navne beskriver 10 af navnene (70%) den navnebærende lokalitet i forhold til en antaget kvalitet ved denne; resten betegner lokalitetens relation (30%) i forhold til noget eksternt.

Eftersom *bolstaper/bolstad* har haft en endog meget lang anvendelsesperiode, er det teoretisk muligt at *bolstaper/bolstad* som stednavneelement også har været aktivt over en lang periode. Ved hjælp af diverse dateringsfaktorer, lingvistiske såvel som ikke-lingvistiske, er det dog muligt at indsnævre brugen af *bolstaper* som stednavneelement i Sverige til en periode der strækker sig fra før kristendommens indførelse (dvs. vikingetiden) til muligvis så sent som det 14. århundrede. I Finland har *bolstaper* med bebyggelsesdenotatum sandsynligvis kun været aktivt i perioden fra ca. 1200-1400; anvendt om jordarealer synes navnetypen at have været aktiv i meget lang tid, i hvert fald så sent som i det 18. århundrede.

Kapitel 9 opsummerer afhandlingens delkonklusioner og knytter resultaterne fra de forskellige kapitler sammen. Spørgsmålet om hovedbetydningen af stednavneelementet *bólstaðr* søges besvaret. Hvor den typiske ordbogsdefinition er 'gård', viser den topografiske undersøgelse at den onomastiske funktion har været mere specialiseret. Den fysiske beliggen-

hed af bebyggelser med navne på *-bólstaðr* tyder på at stednavneelementet har denoteret en 'sekundær bosættelse opstået som følge af opsplitningen af en større enhed'. Denne onomastiske funktion ser ud til at have været den samme både i oprindelseslandet Norge og i Nordatlanten. Forledsinventaret i de nordatlantiske *bólstaðr*-stednavne synes snarere at have udviklet sig efter norsk model end at være opstået og udviklet uafhængigt heraf. Dog er en vis ændring i forledsinventaret synlig, især som følge af fremmed indflydelse. Hovedtyper af analogi skitseres og sættes i relation til *bólstaðr*-materialet. Det vises at stednavneelementet er tilbøjeligt til at udvikle visse mønstre som imiteres i andre navne. Endelig hævdes det at distributionen af *bólstaðr*-navne afgrænser et kerneområde af hovedsagelig norrøn bosætning og kultur i modsætning til andre områder der traditionelt set anses for at have haft norrøn bosættelse og dominans. Det må dog pointeres at der kan være specielle topografiske og onomastiske grunde til at nogle områder savner dette stednavneelement.

Det beslægtede østskandinaviske *bolstaper* anses almindeligvis for at have haft den samme anvendelse som gno. *bólstaðr*, dog med den bemærkelsesværdige forskel at det også anvendes i primære marknavne som generelt anses for at være yngre end bebyggelsesnavnene. Distributionen af *bolstaper*-navne er begrænset til Uppland i Sverige og den nærmest tilstødende del af Finland.

Inkluderet i værket er der sluttelig to appendikser hvori ikke-genuine stednavne på gno. *-bólstaðr* er placeret. Appendiks 1 består af 22 unge stednavne med efterleddet *-bist(er)* fra Shetland, Orkney og Caithness, ordnet alfabetisk. Disse anses ikke for at være genuine stednavne på *-bólstaðr*, men derimod analogisk dannede navne der med en svensk term kan betegnes som *analogiske affixnamnbildningar*. I Appendiks 2 gennemgås og tolkes – efter oprindelsesland og alfabetisk – en række stednavne som enten har været anset for at indeholde stednavneelementet *bólstaðr*, eller som i deres moderne form bærer præg af at kunne indeholde gno. *bólstaðr*. Alle forsøges de tolket på en mere tilfredsstillende måde.



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- BK** = Munch, P. A. (ed.), *Registrum prædiorum et reddituum ad ecclesias diocesis Bergensis saeculo p. C. XIVto pertinentium vulgo dictum »Bergens Kalvskind« (Björgyniar Kalfskinn)*, (Kristiania, 1843).
- Blaeu** = Blaeu, Johan, 'Scotia Regnum', 'Orcadum et Schetlandiæ', 'Cathenesia', 'Southerlandia', 'Strath-Navernia', 'Æbudæ Insulæ sive Hebrides', 'Leogus et Haraia', 'Vistus Insula', 'Skia vel Skiana', 'Mula Insula', 'Iura Insula', 'Ila Insula', vol. v, in *Atlas Major*, (Amsterdam, 1662), 12 vols. [Some of the maps have been published in earlier publications of Willem Blaeu and Johan Blaeu. However, all are found in this atlas and are thus listed under the year of its publication.].
- Borns Søkort** = *Kaart over Færøerne. Forfattet af Capt. Born 1795*. Original at Søkortsarkivet, Copenhagen.
- BruSym** = *Bruce of Symbister Papers*, unpublished manuscript in SA.
- BV** = *Book of Valuation, County of Caithness, 1798*, unpublished manuscript in SRO (Catalogue no. GD 280), (as cited in Waugh, 1985).
- Cap.** = *Trondhjems Kapitelsbog, Fortegnelse over det trondhjemske Kapitels Jordegods*, Unpublished manuscript from c. 1550.
- CBS1** = Donaldson, Gordon (ed.), *The Court Book of Shetland, 1602-4*, (Edinburgh, 1954).
- CBS2** = Donaldson, Gordon (ed.), *The Court Book of Shetland, 1615-28*, (Edinburgh, 1991).
- Census** = *Census 1841*, available on microfilm, New Register House, Edinburgh, (as cited in Waugh, 1985).
- Commis. Rec.** = 'Commisariot Records of Orkney', in *OLM*, vol. 2, pp. 51-5; 173-80; 245-9.
- DI** = *Diplomatarium Islandicum : Íslenzkt fornbréfasafn, sem hefir inn að halda bréf og gjörninga, dóma og máldaga, og aðrar skrár, er snerta Íslands eða íslenzka menn*. (Copenhagen, 1857-72), 16 vols.
- DKS** = Johnston, A. W. & Johnston, A. (eds), *Diplomatarium Katanese et Sutherlandese – Caithness and Sutherland Records*, (Viking Society, 1909-), 2 vols.

- DN** = Lange, C. C. A., Unger, C. R., & Huitfeldt-Kaas, H. J. (eds), *Diplomatarium Norvegicum: Oldbreve til kundskap om Norges indre og ytre forhold, sprog, slegter, seder, lovgivning og rettergang i middelalderen*, (Kristiania, 1847-), vol. 1-.
- DOH** = Johnston, Alfred W. & Johnston, Amy (eds), *Diplomatarium Orcadense et Hialtlandense = Fornbréfasafn Orkneyinga og Hjaltlendinga = Orkney and Shetland Records*, (London, 1907-42), 4 vols.
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- Eb** = Sveinsson, E. Ó. & Þorðarson, M. (eds), *Eyrbyggja saga. Brands þáttur þrva*, (Reykjavík, 1935).
- Eir** (LdnHauksb) = 'Eiríks saga rauða', in Jónsson E. & Jónsson, F. (eds), *Hauksbók. Udgiven efter de Arnemagnæanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544, og 675, 4<sup>o</sup> samt forskellige papirshåndskrifter*, (Copenhagen, 1892-96).
- Elmevik** = Elmevik, Lennart, 'Ett försvundet uppländskt bolstad-namn', in *OUÅ* 1967, pp. 17-22.
- FK** = Nørlund, N. E., *Færøernes kortlægning. En historisk fremstilling*, (Copenhagen, Geodætisk Instituts Publikationer VI, 1944).
- FMU** = Hausen, R. (ed.), *Finlands medeltidsurkunder; samlade och i tryck utgivna af Finlands statsarkiv*. (1910-35), 8 vols.
- Gsk.** = *Generalstabens opmåling af Færøerne, 1895-8*.
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- Heather** = Heather, William, *A New and Improved Chart of the Hebrides*, (1804), SRO.
- HSRO** = Thomson, William P. L. (ed.), *Lord Henry Sinclair's 1492 Rental of Orkney*, (Kirkwall, 1996).
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- Hæns** = 'Hænsa-Þóris saga', in Nordal, S. & Jónsson, G. (eds), *Borgfirdinga sqgur*, (Reykjavík, 1938).
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- Jarðabók** = Magnússon, Á., & Vídalín, P. (eds), *Jarðabók*, (Kaupmannahöfn, 1913-1990), 13 vols.
- jb** = *Jordebok*, Kammararkivet, Stockholm. Unpublished manuscript.
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- KSB** = *Kirk Session of Bressay*, unpublished manuscript in SA (Ch. 2/1108/1).
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- Ldn** (LdnHauksb) = Jónsson E. & Jónsson, F. (eds), *Hauksbók. Udgiven efter de Arnamagnæanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544, og 675, 4<sup>o</sup> samt forskellige papirshåndskrifter*, (Copenhagen, 1892-96).
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- Linde** = Linde, Gunnar, *Studier över de svenska sta-namnen*, (Uppsala, 1951).
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- McDougall** = McDougall, Stephen, *Map of the Island of Islay, Surveyed 1749-51*, (1751), SRO.
- LSA** = Kartor och handlingar i Lantmäteristyrelsens arkiv. Helsingfors.
- NG** = Rygh, Oluf (ed.), *Norske gaardnavne*, (Kristiania/Oslo, 1897-1936), 19 vols.
- NG indl.** = Rygh, Oluf, *Norske gaardnavne. Forord og indledning*, (Kristiania, 1898).
- NO** = Hausen, G. (ed.), *Nylands ortnamn, deras former och förekomst till år 1600 utgivna af Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland*, (1920-24), 3 vols. **H** = "Hau-sens samling"; **Pgt** = Pergamentssamlingen i Finlands statsarkiv; **2919-3484** = Nylands räkenskapssamling för åren 1539-1599.
- NRJ** = Huitfeldt-Kaas, H. J., *Norske Regnskaber og Jordebøger fra det 16de Aar-hundrede (1514-21)*, (Kristiania, 1887-1901).
- OAU** = Samlingar i Ortnamnsarkivet i Uppsala.
- OEJ** = Brinchmann, C. & Agerholt, J. (eds), *Olav Engelbrektssøns jordebog: register paa St. Olavs jorder forfattet under erkebiskop Olav Engelbrektssøn: Anhang: Erkebiskop Gautes jordebøger*, (Oslo, 1926).
- OC** = Hamre, Anne-Marit (ed.), *Trondhjems reformats 1589; Oslo Domkapittels jordebok 1595*, (Oslo, Norsk Historisk Kjeldeskrift-Institutt, 1983).
- Oftedal** = Oftedal, Magne, 'The Village Names of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides', in *Norsk tidsskrift for sprogvidenskap*, vol. xvii, (Oslo, 1954), pp. 363-409.

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- OPS** = *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, published by the Bannatyne Club, (Edinburgh, 1855), 2 parts, 3 vols.
- OR** = Orkney Rentals in the period 1500-1739 and 1794, unpublished manuscripts in the Orkney County Library, Kirkwall. (source-forms as found in Marwick, 1952).
- Orkn** = Nordal, Sigurðr (ed.), *Orkneyinga saga*, (Reykjavík, 1913-6).
- OrkTes** = Barclay, Robert S. (ed.) *Orkney Testaments and Inventories 1573-1615*, Scottish Record Society, New Series 6, (Edinburgh, 1977).
- OS1** = Ordnance Survey maps of Shetland and Orkney, One Inch to the Mile, first edition, (Ordnance Survey, 1876-8).
- Preston** = Preston, Thomas, *A New Hydrographical Survey of the Islands of Shetland*, (1781), SRO.
- RA** = Riksarkivet, Stockholm.
- RAp** = Pergamentsbrev i RA. Unpublished parchment letters in the RA.
- red.-jb** = *Reduktionsjordebok*, Kammararkivet, Stockholm. Unpublished manuscript.
- RegDds** = *Register of Deeds*, unpublished manuscript in SA (SC. 12/53/1).
- RegTes** = *Register of Testaments in Shetland 1611-1650*, published by SRO, (Edinburgh, 1904), SA/SRO.
- Rental of Lewis** = *Judicial Rental of Lewis*, 1718, unpublished manuscript in the University of Glasgow Archives.
- REO** = Clouston, J. Storer (ed.), *Records of the Earldom of Orkney, 1299-1614*, (Edinburgh, 1914).
- Rep.** = Erslev, K., Christensen, W. & Hude, A. (eds), *Repertorium diplomaticum regni Danici mediævalis ; Fortegnelse over Danmarks Breve fra Middelalderen med Udtog af de hidtil utrykte*, series 1 (Copenhagen, 1894-1912), 4 vols; series 2, (Copenhagen, 1928-39), 9 vols.
- Retours** = *Inquisitionum ad Capellam Domini Regis Retornatarum quae in publicis archivis Scotiae adhuc servantur. Abbreviato. Printed by command of his majesty King George III*, (1811-6), 3 vols.
- Rhez. Monum. Upl.** = Stenbock, C. M. & Lundberg, O. (eds), *Rhezeliuss, J. H., Monumenta Uplandica. Reseanteckningar från åren 1635, 1636, 1638*, (Uppsala, 1915-7).
- RMS** = Thomson, J. M., et al. (eds), *Register of the Great Seal: Registrum Magni Sigilli Regnum Scotorum*, (Edinburgh, 1882-1914).
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- Røde Bog** = Huitfeldt, H. I. (ed.), *Biskop Eysteins Jordebog (den røde Bog): Fortegnelse over det geistlige Gods i Oslo Bispedømme omkring Aar 1400*, (Kristiania, 1879).

- SA** = Shetland Archives, 44 King Harald Street, Lerwick ZE1 0EQ, Shetland, GB.
- SD** = Liljegren, Joh. Gust., *et al.* (eds), *Svenskt Diplomatarium*, (Stockholm, 1829-1974), 10 vols.
- SDns** = Silfverstolpe, Carl (ed.), *Svenskt diplomatarium från och med år 1401*, (Stockholm, 1875-1904), 4 vols.
- SheDoc** = Ballantyne, J. H. & Smith, B. (eds), *Shetland Documents, 1580-1611*, (Lerwick, 1994).
- SheDoc2** = Ballantyne, J. H. & Smith, B. (eds), *Shetland Documents, 1195-1579*, (Lerwick, 1999).
- Sinclair (Freswick)** = Unpublished estate papers, in SRO (Catalogue no. GD136). (as cited in Waugh, 1985).
- Sinclair (Mey)** = Unpublished estate papers, in SRO (Catalogue no. GD96). (as cited in Waugh, 1985).
- SLS** = Samlingar i Svenska litteratursällskapets Folkkultursarkiv. Helsingfors
- SMR** = Tunström, Sven (ed.), *Svenska medeltidsregester : Förteckning öfver urkunder till Sveriges historia 1434-1441*, (Stockholm, 1937).
- SRO** = Scottish Record Office, HM General Register House, Edinburgh EH1 3YY, Scotland, GB.
- SRP** = Kullberg, N. A., *Svenska Riksarchivets pergamentsbref 1351-1400*, (Stockholm, 1866-72), 3 vols.
- SRPapp.** = *Svenska Riksarchivets pappershandlingar 1351-1400. Förtecknade med angivande af innehållet, (Meddelanden från Svenska Riksarkivet 11)*, (Stockholm, 1887).
- St.** = *Stiftsbog eller Fortegnelse over Kirkernes Gods i Oslo og Hamar Stifter, optaget efter Statholderen Povel Huitfeldts Foranstaltning i Aarene 1574-1577*, Unprinted manuscript in Riksarkivet, Oslo.
- Stahl** = Stahl, Anke-Beate, *Place-Names of Barra in the Outer Hebrides*, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1999).
- Stewart** = Stewart, John, *Shetland Place-Names*, (Lerwick, 1987).
- Stu** = Kålund, Kr. (ed.), *Sturlunga saga. Efter membranen Króksfjarðar, udfyldt efter Reykfjarðarbók*, (Reykjavík, 1906-11), 2 vols.
- Sutherland (Forse)** = Unpublished estate papers, in SRO (Catalogue no. GD139). (as in Waugh, 1985).
- Svartboken** = Hausen, R. (ed.), *Registrum Ecclesiæ Aboensis eller Åbo domkyrkas Svartbok med tillæg ur Skoklosters Codex Aboensis. I tryck utgifven af Finlands statsarkiv* (1890).
- Thomson** = Thomson, John, *Atlas of Scotland*, (1832).
- Tingb.** = Joensen, Einar (ed.), *Tingbókin 1615-54*, (Tórshavn, 1953).
- Traill** = David Traill's Acct. books. Unpublished transcript in the Orkney Archives.
- Udb** = *Uppländska domböcker*, utg. av kungl. Humanistiska vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala, (Uppsala & Leipzig, 1925-56), 9 vols.
- Uopl.** = *Upplands handlingar*, Kammararkivet, Stockholm. Unpublished manuscript.

- Uthell Book** = *Uthell Book, 1601*, unpublished manuscript, Orkney County Library, Kirkwall.
- UUbPer** = Pergamentsbrev i Uppsala universitetsbibliotek. Unpublished parchment letters in the Uppsala universitetsbibliotek.
- van Keulen** = van Keulen, Gerard, *Niewe paskaart van de West Kust van Schotland* ..., (c. 1734), SRO.
- Vatn** = Jónsson, Finnur (ed.), *Vatnsdælasaga*, (Copenhagen, 1934).
- Waugh** = Waugh, Doreen J., *The place-names of six parishes in Caithness, Scotland*, (unpublished Ph.D.-thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1985).
- ÅO** = Hausen, G. (ed.), *Ålands ortnamn, deras former och förekomst till år 1600 utgivna af Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland*, (Helsingfors, 1927). **A** = Arvidssons handlingar. Del I-X; **H** = "Hausens samling"; **Pgt** = Pergamentssamlingen i Finlands statsarkiv; **2598-2818** = Ålands räkenskapssamling för åren 1537-1599.



## Other Abbreviations

acc.	=	accusative
adj.	=	adjective
adv.	=	adverb
approx.	=	approximately
Arg.	=	Argyll
c.	=	circa
cf.	=	confer
Ch./Chs	=	chapter(s)
col./cols	=	colum(s)
cp.	=	compare
dat.	=	dative
decl.	=	declension
ed./eds	=	editor(s)
e.g.	=	exempli gratia, for example
etc.	=	et cetera
f.	=	feminine
Fi.	=	Finland, Finlandish
Fær.	=	Faroese
gen.	=	genitive
<i>ibid.</i>	=	ibidem
Icel.	=	Iceland, Icelandic
i.e.	=	id est, that is
Inv.	=	Inverness-shire
m.	=	masculine
n.	=	neuter
no./nos	=	number(s)
nom.	=	nominative
Norw.	=	Norway, Norwegian
O&S	=	Orkney and Shetland
ON	=	Old Norse
op. cit.	=	opere citato, in the work already quoted
Ork.	=	Orkney, Orcadian
OSw	=	Old Swedish
p./pp.	=	page(s)
pl.	=	plate
sb.	=	subject
Scot.	=	Scotland, Scottish
sg.	=	singular
Shetl.	=	Shetland, Shetlandic
sn.	=	sogn, sokn, parish
s.n.	=	sub nomine

Sut.	=	Sutherland
Sw	=	Sweden, Swedish
vol./vols	=	volume(s)
*	=	a constructed form
†	=	no longer in existence
<	=	developed from
>	=	developed to
//	=	slashes are used to enclosed orthographic symbols
[ ]	=	1. letters within square brackets have been supplied where they have been omitted by the Scribe in error or worn away from the manuscript. 2. In quotations, square brackets with three punctuation marks are used to signal that text has been omitted owing to irrelevance. 3. place-name forms within square brackets are name-forms which only indirectly refer to the place-name under investigation. 4. square brackets are also used to enclose phonetic symbols.

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